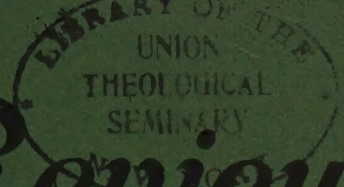


The



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Edited by AL-HAJ KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN.

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THE IMÁM READING HIS 'IDU 'L-AZHA (1347 A.H.) ADDRESS.

(Note: The upper part of the illustration represents the section of the congregation on the left of the Imám and the lower one that on the right)



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
 مُحَمَّدٌ وَآلُهُ عَلَى سُلَّةٍ الْكَرِيمِ

# THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

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ZU 'L-QA'DA—ZU 'L-HIJJA 1347 A.H.  
 VOL. XVII. APRIL—MAY, 1929 A.C. No. 4

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## ISLAM, MY ONLY CHOICE

By A MUSLIM, FORMERLY A CHRISTIAN

I WAS once a Christian, but now I am a Mussalman. The process of my conversion, though difficult, was not a long one. It cost me some time, and, I must admit, some reluctance, to dispel from my mind the glamour of myth and mystery, and consequently to lift the yoke of dogma from my neck, but when I had done so, the rest of the task was comparatively easy. When once I had allowed my intellect to prevail over sentimentality and deliberately had placed religion on the anvil of logic and utility, I was left no other alternative but to accept Islam for my faith. In fact, if religion is chosen from the standpoint of reason and utility, then religions other than Islam have no chance. In this short paper I do not propose to enter into religious controversy or indulge in any polemics of faith or dogma. I am a business man, and I have adopted the same course in choosing my faith as that which I pursue in making my choice of the various other things that come up for selection in the course of my business.

### THE HISTORICITY OF FAITHS AND THEIR FOUNDERS.

All religions are a matter of history. Even with Islam, the latest of all, more than thirteen hundred years have passed

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since its birth, and if a man must look to some Holy Scripture for the light he has to receive from a religion, no religion should claim our allegiance unless its record is absolutely unimpeachable on the score of authenticity. In this respect Islam seems to me to possess merits of its own—merits which attach to no other religion. For example, the Scriptures of all other religions have now been found, as is even admitted by their respective adherents, to be wanting in genuineness. Even Rabbis and high dignitaries of the Church are to-day ceasing to believe in the authenticity of the Holy Bible. The followers of Zarathustra can only point to five or six verses that have come to them in their original purity, out of all the revealed mass ascribed to that great prophet of Persia. Vedicism, popularly known as Hinduism, presents another insurmountable difficulty. The Holy Vedas were written in a language now obsolete and what we should call "dead"; no one in India speaks it or understands it. The Vedic verses are susceptible of contradictory interpretations; they have given rise to innumerable sects, who differ from each other even in the fundamentals of their religion while they all receive their inspiration from the same Book. There are atheists, theists, agnostics and deists, image-worshippers and image-breakers, among Hindus, but they all take the same Book as the authority to substantiate their respective views. The translation of the Vedas given by one class of Hindus is condemned by the others. On the other hand, Al-Qur-án, the Holy Book of Islam, is admitted by friends and foes to be the very words revealed to Muhammad. The Book has maintained its purity till now. Fortunately we live in times when reliable criticism has established the above facts, and its verdict has not been questioned. Now whatever may be the worth of the teachings of a religion, I think I could not consider or accept its claims when the very source of our information with respect to it is of a dubious character. From this point of view I think I am justified in saying that there is no comparison between Islam and other religions.

I was constrained to come to the same conclusion as to the Founders of the various religious systems. The Vedic



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religion is the oldest of all; but we know nothing about the authors or recipients of Vedic revelations excepting their names, and these are but incidentally mentioned at the beginning of the different Vedic Mantras (hymns). Similarly, the strictly historical aspect of the Lord of Christianity is not free from doubt and suspicion. Even if Jesus may be admitted to be an historic character, we know very little of him. Mary, we read, gave birth to the illustrious Nazarene; but soon after the event she and her husband fled from Judæa with the child; and after some twelve years Jesus is seen in synagogues finding fault with the Rabbis and joining issue with the teachers of Judaism. Then the curtain drops again. Another gap of some eighteen years, and the Master comes back out of an Essenic monastery and is seen on the banks of the River Jordan. But his ministry was too short for him to become our perfect specimen and guide in the manifold and divine walks of human life. A few sermons, a few miracles, a few prayers accompanied by a few curses are not enough to give humanity a religion. His movements are of meteoric character which presents few incidents of note and consequence, excepting his crucifixion. Moses was no doubt a great law-giver, an historic character, liberator of his nation from their bondage in Egypt, worker of wonders and performer of miracles, but not an example for practical purposes in real life. In a word, the life of all these founders is enshrouded in much mystery. My surprise knew no bounds when I began to read of Muhammad. Like a panorama the events of his life passed before my eyes one after the other. From the cradle to the grave everything of note in his life is narrated and preserved in a well-authenticated record. I was amazed to find in him an assemblage of the best of characteristics so rare in others. I am at a loss to understand how he could unite in himself all the best qualities of discrepant characters. He is meek and at the same time courageous; modest as a maiden but the bravest of the soldiers on a battlefield. While with children, loved for his playfulness and endearing talk to the little ones; when in the company of sages and old men, respected for his wisdom and far-sightedness. Truthful,

honest, trustworthy; a reliable friend, a loving father and husband, a dutiful son, and a helpful brother, Muhammad is the same man whether in adversity or prosperity; affluence or indigence cannot change him; unruffled in his temperament whether in peace or in war. Kind and hospitable, liberal in giving but abstemious for himself. In short, judge Muhammad from whatever angle of human character you will, and he is nowhere found wanting.

With a critical eye, I studied all that has been said about him by his opponents. They could not lay a finger on a single flaw in his private character. It is perfect. And whatever has been said against his public character in one or two things, involves really a matter of principle. They say he had more than one wife; that he waged war; that he did this, that, and the other; but before we judge him in these matters we have to decide as to the validity of the principles under which he worked. If polygamy is a matter of necessity in certain circumstances and an economic measure sometimes, then why find fault with Muhammad, when all the great men and benefactors of humanity, especially in the world of religion, have all of them had more than one wife. As to the use of the sword, the whole world until now has taken the greatest pride in unsheathing the weapon. War has hitherto been an indispensable institution. A Prophet was needed to teach the world the true ethics of war, and who can deny the nobility of Muhammad in this respect? He unsheathed his sword only to crush evil and defend truth. With great care I read the accounts of every war waged by him, and they were all in self-defence.

There is something unique in this great man; he is the only teacher among the noble race of prophets who brought his mission to success. Jesus was crushed by evil, and words of despair and despondency were on his lips on the cross. Muhammad really crushed the serpent, but just in the moments of his victory, when the real "generation of vipers" was at his feet, his character revealed another noble aspect—that of forgiveness. No student of history can read the account of the conquest of Mecca by Muhammad without bowing down to



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that great hero. He not only forgives his cruel oppressors, but raises them to places of dignity and honour. Who knows what Jesus would have done if he had achieved any victory over his enemies? After all, he said that he had come not to send peace on the earth, but a sword. Moses, Ramchandra, and Krishna, the other great teachers in the world of religion, disclosed not a gleam of mercy in their dealings with their enemies.

### THE KALEIDOSCOPIC VIEW OF RELIGION.

It did not take me long to pass in review the various religious persuasions with their tenets and doctrines. Whatever may have been the original form of Hinduism, it is now one vast accretion of ceremonialism and sacrifice, this being the only feature common to its numberless sects; beyond this there is no meeting-ground among them. In fact, there does not exist a definition of Hinduism wide enough to comprise all its sections and subdivisions. Animism, element-worship, hero-worship, polytheism in its worst shapes, monotheism, though not in its pure form—all come under the heading of Hinduism. It possesses its philosophy, but it is a philosophy which has no bearing whatever on practical life; it tries to solve certain riddles—for example, the problem of ultimate pain and pleasure, and here it speaks of the transmigration of the soul; but all this is a species of mental luxury possessing no practical advantage. I admit that ceremonialism and sacrifices are not without their uses, but they are of secondary importance—a means to certain ends—whereas in Hinduism they have become essentials. Again, these Hindu rituals were intended to meet certain local and topical needs, and cannot therefore be of use to alien races and later generations.

Judaism brought light and culture into the world, but in the course of time it, too, became merged in ceremonialism and sacrifice. The vice of ceremonial piety lies in the fact that when once a person has observed its demands he thinks himself to be better than his neighbour, no matter what crime he may commit. For this very reason the Brahmins in Hinduism and the Pharisees in Judaism considered themselves

absolved of all the duties laid upon other members of society. Jesus did not come with a new religion, nor did he found a Church; he was a Jew of the Jews. Jealous for the religion taught by Moses, he came to redeem the teachings of the Master from the formalism of the Pharisees. He had the courage to expose their hollowness and hypocrisy. In short, his aim was to reform Judaism and to restore it to its pristine purity, but his enemies would not allow him to do so, and so he failed in the end. Then St. Paul came on the scene, but instead of carrying on the work of Jesus, he grafted on the old faith something quite new and repugnant to it—the religion of the Blood and its grace.

It is called the "New Covenant," but it seems to me but a reappearance of old Paganism with a change of name and setting. I sum up here the story of Christianity in a few words: Man drowned in sin and God alienated from him and in anger. To appease His wrath He sends His own son to the world through a virgin's womb. The son is brought to the cross and pays the penalty for all human sin, thus washing away the sins of humanity with his blood. He dies for all, and then through his resurrection brings new life to mankind. This is the superstructure of the Pauline schism as it was never taught by the Lord of Christianity. But it is not a new revelation. It has now come to light that Jesus as portrayed by Paul and others as "the new Adam" is only the last of the virgin-born Sun-gods—Mithra, Apollo, Bacchus, Horus, Osiris, and others; all of them born at the first hour of the 25th of December. They all led a peaceful mission; the first miracle that all performed had some connection with wine; they all declared that they had come to save humanity through their blood; they all went to death at the third hour of Friday sometime in the end of March; they all remained in the tomb for two days; they all rose again on Easter Sunday; they all ascended into heaven with a promise to return.

Thus, centuries before the construction of the Christian Church, different countries had already evolved a system of religion which Christianity repeated word by word in the writings of the early Fathers. In the names of these virgin-



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born incarnates people were initiated into their cult through baptism. Their votaries worshipped the cross, and their great festivals were Easter and Christmas. In fact, the Roman Catholic Church, the first church on Pauline lines after Jesus, is just a replica of the old cult of mystery; and Christian worship remains sun-worship with all its old features. How can we stigmatize Paganism as a false religion when all its features did but forestall the official Church in the West? If Paganism is falsehood, the formal Church must, *ipso facto*, be falsehood too. Anyhow, current Christianity is not a religion if by religion is meant a code of life that may help man to live worthily in this world and in the hereafter.

Viewed from this standpoint, again I say, Islam is my only choice. It is a religion of action, of good morals and ethics; a religion simple and practical; if I am asked to subscribe to its doctrines, I can do so freely: they are not dogmatic in their nature. All Islamic tenets are reasonable and consistent with intelligence. They have a direct bearing on life; and here I will go more into detail.

Doubtless Islam is not free from some sort of formalities. Muslims also make sacrifice, but my happiness knew no bounds when I read in the Holy Qur-án:—

“It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East and the West, but righteousness is this, that one should believe in Allah and the last day and the angels and the book and the prophets, and give away wealth out of love for Him to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and the beggars and for (the emancipation of) the captives, and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate; and the performers of their promise when they make a promise, and the patient in distress and affliction and in time of conflict—these are they who are true (to themselves), and these are they who guard (against evil).”<sup>1</sup>

What a wonderful, decisive and bold statement! It brushes ceremonialism completely away. Islam has a few formalities but

<sup>1</sup> Holy Qur-án, ii. 177.

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they seem to me to be essential formalities—one of them being the turning of the face, when in prayer, towards Mecca. It indicates the place that gave birth to Islam, and is hence a necessity; but the above verse says that doing so *in itself* is not a virtue unless thereby we are helped to observe certain beliefs and actions which are there set out. In fact, Muslims turn their faces to Mecca to remember and renew the inspiration they first received from that sacred place; and if turning our faces to Mecca in itself is of no value, then what of other ceremonial acts?

Muslims do observe sacrifice, but not to appease Divine wrath. One of the objects is to "Feed the poor man who is contented, and the beggar."<sup>1</sup> This institution also supplies an occasion for being benevolent to others, and it is a symbol of the religion of Allah; as the Holy Qur-án says, we have to submit to His will as the animals under the knife have to submit to ours. And then a verse on the subject in the following thundering words denudes sacrifices of the merits that had been attached to them by other religions—such as the propitiation of Divine anger:—

"There does not reach Allah their flesh nor their blood, but to Him is acceptable the guarding (against evil) on your part; thus has He made them subservient to you, that you may magnify Allah because He has guided you aright; and give good news to those who do good (to others)."<sup>2</sup>

I know of no other formality in Islam; and if ceremonial piety is in itself of no consequence, then Hinduism and Judaism cannot satisfy human needs as a code of religion. Christianity no doubt did away with all the ritual that Jesus observed himself, because his personal sacrifice, as they say, atoned for it and absolved the believers in the blood from the ceremonial burden. But another set of rituals and formalities entered into the Church as a legacy from Paganism, and the position is worse than before. I cannot conclude these general remarks on religion and turn to the special doctrines of Islam before

<sup>1</sup> Holy Qur-án, xx. 36.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., xxii. 37.



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emphasizing one thing, though I have made reference to it in the foregoing; that is, the necessity for the Qur-ánic Revelation at a time when the old Books of God had become hopelessly mixed with folk-lore. Every religion of the world has based its teachings on a Revelation from on High. It has pleased the Lord to guide humanity into the right path by revealing His Will to the world. The position is quite a tenable one, but if His Revelation sometimes suffers in purity and becomes vitiated, should He not send another Revelation to take the place of the old one? The Lord of the Universe observes the same course in all His dispensations. He creates things for our use, and when they disappear or become impaired or alloyed there comes a fresh supply of such needful things, What is true in physical dispensations must be true also in the spiritual sphere. How can a believer shut his eyes to the necessity of a new Revelation if the old one has admittedly become corrupt? But none of all the Revelations given to the various nations of the world in olden days had remained in their original form—a fact now admitted by all—at that period of the Christian era, and a new Revelation—the Qur-án—was a necessity.

### REVEALED BOOKS AND THEIR CONTENTS.

Though all the peoples in the world were respectively given a book for their guidance from the Lord, they are all lost to-day with the exception of the Vedas, the Bible, and the Qur-án. The two first scriptures are of a kindred nature, but the third exhibits an absolutely different character. The Vedas and the Bible speak respectively of some particular nations, the so-called “chosen people” of God or gods; while the Holy Qur-án is neither a narrative of a tribe nor a story of any individual. It concerns itself exclusively with man in general. Man and his God is its chief theme.

After speaking of the creation of the world and man, the chief interest of the Hebrew Scripture lies in one particular branch of the human race—the descendants of Abraham through Isaac. It speaks of the migration of the Israelites from the land of Abraham, their settlement in Egypt, their

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subsequent bondage under the Egyptian yoke, their liberation by Moses under God's command; then comes a mention of their religious and ceremonial code; again their wandering in the wilderness, their conquest of the promised land, and the establishment of the Hebrew governments, their grandeur and splendour; their subsequent iniquities and misdeeds; their stubbornness and vicious indulgences, and finally prophetic references by Jesus to their downfall. All these facts are arrayed in the Book, one after the other, as it were on an historical basis. The Bible also contains a narrative of the Hebrew Patriarchs, who impart religious teaching accompanied by comprehensive curses directed against their enemies. The Book also speaks of the visitations of God from time to time and the appearance of angels with good news. In short, the Bible is a complete story of the rise and fall of the Hebrews, with Moses at their head as the lawgiver and bringer of good tidings of the coming rise, and with Jesus, the last of the race, shedding tears of grief on the imminent fall. Just as the Holy Bible concerns itself with the Hebrews, so the Vedas speak of another race from Central Asia called Aryans, who crossed the River Indus and took up their abode in the western part of India. The Hindu Book speaks of the Aryan settlement in India as of an agricultural class, where they sang hymns in the praise of elements or other manifestations of Nature which sent timely rains to fertilize their lands and bring them good crops. It speaks of their rituals and sacrifices, it refers to their fights with the aborigines of the country and the final victory of the former over the latter; their civic and martial life; the establishment of their governments and their other occupations; and in the end their self-indulgence and luxury, all painted in poetical strains. Thus the two books are more or less a history of the two tribes, with the mention of religion and its accessories as a matter of incident. Al-Qur-án, on the other hand, is purely a book of God's religion given to man. The elevation and progress of the human race or its degradation or downfall are the chief topics of the Arab Revelation. The Qur-án, doubtless, speaks of certain persons and certain nations, but such allusions are not the main object of the



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Book; they come in by way of illustration. For example, the Book lays down certain principles and doctrines for human edification; it warns man against the deeds that are sure to bring him to the lowest ebb; it reads him lessons of morality and of ethics; it speaks of spirituality and godliness; and it is in elucidation of these teachings that it makes reference to events in the lives of certain men—prophets and their enemies—and nations. It is for this reason that the Qur-án has not generally given full accounts of the people thus alluded to. It is not a collection of stories, but a book of economic, moral, and spiritual instruction. The Bible and the Vedas may, perchance, give inspiration to the descendants of those for whom they were first revealed, but they cannot be of any great interest to mankind at large; while the Qur-án, on the other hand, is the book for all men of every time and clime, and cannot fail to command universal interest.

### THE OBJECT OF REVELATION.

Neither the Vedas nor the Bible seem to specify any object of universal interest for their revelation. God no doubt spoke to Moses at Sinai and ordered him to go to Pharaoh with a message demanding freedom for the Israelites. After the Exodus He again spoke to Moses and gave him the Ten Commandments; and Moses when in need of guidance goes to his Lord from time to time and the Lord expresses His will for the guidance of His people. Similarly, whenever the chosen people are in difficulty or in trouble Jehovah sends His angels with words to meet the occasion. On the same lines we find various Mantras—hymns—in the Vedas revealed to the old Hindu *Rishis*. The Ten Commandments undoubtedly promulgate the lines of action necessary to form a society. Sociable as we are, we must speak truth; we must respect the lives, property, and womenfolk of our neighbours; we must revere our parents, and, to give rest to our body, we must observe the sabbath. I think any human society desirous of keeping itself in a healthy condition could have discovered these principles even without the help of any revelation. But the Qur-ánic Revelation is far above these primitive and temporal

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needs. It comes to raise man to the highest height to which he is able to soar. The first call that came to Muhammad in the cave Hira is a call free from all personal or racial elements. It is a call for the uplifting of man in general. Muhammad was not called upon to serve his own nation, nor did the heavenly dove descend from above to choose the Son of God from among his fellow-countrymen. Muhammad is inspired to raise his fellow-beings, wherever they may be, from the depth of degradation to the zenith of greatness. His first Revelation is as follows:—

“Read in the name of your Lord who created. He created man from a clot. Read and your Lord is Most Honourable, Who taught (to write) with the pen, Taught man what he knew not. Nay! man is most surely in-ordinate, Because he sees himself free from want.”<sup>1</sup>

Man is ordered through Muhammad to read, to cultivate the art of writing, for the spread of books and enlightenment, and to discover sciences not known before, thereby bringing humanity to a position most honourable, because his Creator is Himself most honourable and His creation should index the greatness of the Maker. Matter reaches its physical consummation in the form of man, and Nature cannot improve upon it any further. But the same matter evolves a new thing in the human frame—human consciousness—the sum-total of the passions, which when refined give rise to intellect, sentiment, sociability, morality, ethics, religion, and spirituality. All these divine elements, intended to create a great civilization and to bring man to his real dignity, have been reposed in human nature. But as a full-fledged man on the physical plane evolves from a clot of blood in the womb, so was human consciousness in clot condition at the appearance of Muhammad, who was deputed by God in the same verse to show his fellow-beings the right path, as revealed to him by God, that will bring forth all that is noble and good in man.

This grand object the Holy Book takes for its revelation and makes mention of it in its very beginning.<sup>2</sup> When it

<sup>1</sup> Holy Qur-án, xcvi. 1-7.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., ii. 5.



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defines the most exalted position which man is entitled to achieve, it also indicates the lowest degradation to which he may descend. In the story of Adam<sup>1</sup> the high and low conditions of man are defined. He is the vicegerent of God on earth. He is to receive homage from the angels of heaven and earth; and for this purpose the sun and the moon, with all other manifestations of Nature, as the Qur-án says, have been made subservient to man.<sup>2</sup> All this he can achieve through knowledge, but if he is led astray from the right path he will be deprived of the means that contribute to his happiness.<sup>3</sup> With all our civilization we have not as yet attained the height which we have to achieve under the directions of the Last Book. We have not secured the position of being able to bring the sun and the moon into subjection. This is the goal which the Qur-án prescribes for us in our sojourn on the earth. In this connection the Qur-án further reveals to us that we possess the highest capabilities,<sup>4</sup> but as we have arisen from an animal state and carry with us certain carnal cravings, the Book warns us that our way to the goal is beset with difficulties. We are liable to be degraded to the lowest of the low,<sup>5</sup> and therefore we need guidance<sup>6</sup> to help us upwards in our evolutionary journey and to save us from falling into pitfalls. This is another purpose of Qur-ánic Revelation. We are in the dark<sup>7</sup> and we need a light, and the Book claims to be that light. Let St. Paul blackguard human nature; Islam says that we possess an immaculate nature which is inherently free from the taint of sin. In this Islam differs from Christianity. If hell is the reward of sin and heaven is reserved for those who leave this earth sinless, Islam and Christianity advance two different and contradictory propositions. Christianity says that man is born in sin, while according to Islam he is sinless at his birth. If a child, therefore, dies at his very birth, he must go to heaven, under Islamic teaching, but he is foredoomed to hell according to Christian principles. In other words, heaven is our birthright under Islam. We may lose it

<sup>1</sup> Holy Qur-án, ii. sect. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., xiv. 32-33; xvi. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., ii. 36.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., xcv. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., xcv. 5.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., xcv. 6.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., xiv. sec. 1.

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by our subsequent misdeeds. But according to Christianity we are born for hell unless reclaimed by our faith in the Blood. Similarly, sin is a heritage according to Church beliefs, but it is an after-acquisition under Islam, and can be avoided.

Thus the sole object of Christian Revelation is to bring man out of the slough of sin up to the brink of virtue, but Islam finds man already on its banks at his birth and comes to raise him to its highest flight that will bring him near the precincts of Divinity. What a world of difference is here! To resume the subject, there is another marked difference between the Last and the ancient revelations. The Qur-án is rational in its teachings, while the Hindu and Hebrew Books are dogmatic in imparting their messages. Like a pedagogue or a father whose words are law or gospel to his pupils or children, the Bible and the Vedas assert their precepts and principles in a spirit that seems to expect no opposition or doubt from their respective recipients.

The Books speak of God, of angels, of resurrection, and the Last Day; of Divine messengership, and accountability for present actions in the hereafter; but they make no attempt to substantiate these verities by any intelligent arguments. They contain nothing to meet the demand of a sceptical mind. Perhaps the human mind at the time of these revelations had not as yet crossed the frontiers of infancy, and was groping in the avenue of sentimentality. The Qur-án seems to belong to a time when the human mind had developed enough to give precedence to intellect over blind belief. For it also speaks of the above-mentioned truths, but with logic and reason. To bring home its doctrines to its reader's mind, it makes frequent appeal to our understanding and rational judgment. It draws our attention to various manifestations of Nature as evidence of what it enunciates. For instance, there are logical reasons and rational arguments in the Book to prove the existence of God, of the day of resurrection, the necessity of Divine revelation, and many other things. The Muslim Scripture would not ask its readers to accept any of its teachings—except on the strength of reasoning. This is perhaps why Islam has not observed any atheistic or sceptical movement or



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disposition in its ranks; while no sooner did the Church persecution become relaxed and intellect freed from its iron grip, than secularizing and free thought flourished apace.

In India there has perhaps been no such marked struggle between religion and Agnosticism, for the Vedas favoured atheistic and sceptical tendencies equally with other forms of Hindu schism. And here, again, Islam and the other two religions present a most striking contrast. Education has alienated the human mind from the Church religion. It has brought forth a similar revolt against Hinduism, especially in these latter days. But modern science has only served to strengthen Muslim belief in the Qur-ánic truths. We are rational beings. Reason and logic play a prominent part in all our beliefs and persuasions. No other book but the Qur-án, therefore, will meet the demand of our time.

Again, the first two revelations do not specifically speak of the articles of their faith; each inquirer must gather them for himself from these Books. In the Christian Churches the task fell to the Church Councils. The articles of the Christian faith as promulgated by the Fathers were collected in the Book of Common Prayer, and have been the object of successive revisions from time to time.

In Hinduism, want of a definite statement in the Vedas as to what were the articles of Faith in the Vedic religion gave rise to innumerable sects that differ from each other even in their fundamental tenets. From such a fate the Qur-án has saved the Muslims; for it has clearly laid down in various verses the Islamic articles of Faith.<sup>1</sup>

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## THE FOUNDER OF CHRISTIANITY AS AN APOSTLE OF GOD

By A. RASCHID, Karatia, India

JESUS is the Lord and not the Founder of Christianity. The superstructure of the Church called after his name is the work of St. Paul. Whatever might have been his shortcomings, he

<sup>1</sup> Holy Qur-án, ii. 285.

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undoubtedly was a man of zeal and enthusiasm. He showed firmness of purpose and pertinacity of character. When once he had put his hand to the plough he never looked back. He knew how to work out his aims. Hunchbacked as he was, he was an untiring worker. True to the cause he had so fiercely at heart, he died a martyr to it. In short, he exhibited within himself all that characterizes a great man. But was he an apostle from God? Was he inspired by the Holy Ghost to enlighten his fellow-men as to truths hitherto unrevealed?

The Higher Criticism of the Bible and the able researches of the present-day Modernist movement have established without doubt that most of the events narrated in the Old Testament are folk-lore. For example, it is also admitted that the story of the Creation as given in the Book of Genesis is not history and the episode in the garden of Eden a fiction.

Religion has often and often been subjected to corruption and the holy writings have given way to folk-lore. The Word of God has frequently become mingled with subsequent additions and accretions, but God raised up men from time to time who acted as His mouthpiece; they came with messages from the Lord and purged His revealed Word from man's interpolations. This act of purging God's book from human fabrications has always appeared as if it were a first work of a Messenger from the Lord. Had St. Paul belonged to this blessed class, and had he been inspired by the Holy Ghost, his words should have been free from things which were not of Divine nature. Nay, he should have informed the world that such and such events as narrated in the Sacred Scriptures were not from God. But most of the writings that pass under his name take their basic premises from the Book of Genesis, and especially of Adam and Eve and the forbidden fruit.

Whatever might have been the experience of St. Paul concerning woman in his early romantic life—he might have become a misogynist on account of his being “jilted by some maid of Judah,” as some say—he should not have allowed his own impression of woman to affect his work as an apostle of God. Naturally he might, after his disappointment as a lover, have lent a favourable ear to the judgment passed by



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Jehovah on the first woman, but if God raised up St. Paul as His mouthpiece, his writings should have been free from passages like the following:—

“ Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.”

As a woman-hater he could say what he liked as to female subordination to man, but if the story of Adam and Eve was only a fable how could St. Paul substantiate his view of woman by reference to it, if his inspiration were from the Most High?

[But we experience the same difficulty in judging the Lord of Christianity himself in this respect. He seems to accept as the Word of God all that is now proved to be only folk-lore as given in the Old Testament. He would not vouchsafe any sign to the “ generation of vipers ” but that of Jonah and the fish. Verily the Son of Man must remain in the bowels of the earth for the period for which Jonah remained in the belly of the fish. If the very story of Jonah and the fish is only a fiction, how could one who received his revelation from Above illustrate the coming events of his life by allusion to things that never happened?

There is another hard problem for the evangelist to solve. Jonah entered into the belly of the fish alive and he came out of it alive; if the two events were parallel, how could there be a resurrection? Jesus must go to his grave alive as Jonah did, and if so the theory of the Crucifixion, and the doctrine of Atonement as its sequel, fall to the ground.—ED. I.R.]

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## MODERNIZATION IN THE ISLAMIC FORMS OF DEVOTION?

By KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN

RELIGIONS that have lost their original purity stand in need of modernization, for a Revealed Book that has suffered human interpolation can no longer command the faithful

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allegiance of reasonable men. Similarly, religious institutions that derive their origin from synods and councils in past generations cannot lay claim to any degree of permanency. Man-made things on every plane cry continually for revision and amendment, but whatever things have been created by the hand of God and brought to perfection by Him have always kept their original form and admit of no improvement. Almost all religions except Islam have suffered in their purity from human influences and human tampering. Fortunately for the Muslims, they receive their inspiration from a Book which is admittedly the same to-day as it was when delivered to us by the Founder of our Faith. We have accepted it as the Last Word of God, and we believe that every word of it comes directly from Him. It is not the work of Muhammad, nor has the purport of its message been translated into any words of his. Everything in it—its teachings as well as the language in which those teachings were couched—is from God. This is an orthodox belief, and though Islam has in the course of time given rise to various schools of thought, there has been no difference of opinion in the Islamic world as to the origin and significance of the Qur-án. And there is yet another beauty in the Book. Everything that concerns doctrine, tenets, laws, morals, ethics—in short, every essential for Muslim life and conduct—has been laid down in the Holy Book in terms most unequivocal. The statements are always consistent in meaning; they never admit of two interpretations, and their rendering has been one and the same with every shade of opinion.

In ancient religions ritualistic piety has always bulked large. In Hinduism, as in Judaism, it is part and parcel of the whole faith; Christianity, though it denuded itself of Jewish ceremonialism, nevertheless fell a hopeless victim to Pagan ritual. The Romish and the High Church section of the Church of England present a very good illustration of this. But Islam has almost entirely dispensed with such piety, if piety it can honestly be called. No doubt there is a shade of formalism to be found in some of our institutions, but it is essential—as, for example, in the case of the gestures that we



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observe while in the act of prayer. These indicate certain conditions of mind, and hence are a necessity. I will speak later on as to the why and wherefore of these things; for the present I would simply remark that they cannot admit of any change or allow of any reformation. Everything of this nature has been ordained for us by the Qur-án; and if all the injunctions in the Qur-án are from God, as we do most firmly believe, we cannot take exception to any of the so-called formalities in our prayers. A Muslim is bound to observe them in the letter as well as in the spirit—letter and spirit in such a case being identical. Had the Qur-án ordered us to say our prayers without prescribing the manner in which we are to say them, we could have adopted any form that local or other considerations might recommend. But the Qur-án has not only enjoined for us the saying of the prayer, but it also prescribes the forms which we are to adopt in praying. How can a Muslim follow one part of the Qur-án and disregard another? The Sacred Book has in the clearest terms deprecated such a course. If we stand<sup>1</sup> in our prayers, or bow down and recline,<sup>2</sup> or kneel,<sup>3</sup> or prostrate<sup>4</sup> ourselves by placing our heads on the earth, we do all these things because we have been ordered to do them in the Qur-án. We have been left no discretion in the matter. Some of us may not appreciate the reason for it, but they still have to follow the Qur-án implicitly so long as they remain in the ranks of the faithful. If the various observances in Muslim prayer had been derived from India, Egypt, or some other Muslim land, there would have been reason for a preacher of Islam in the other regions of the world bringing the formal aspects of prayer into conformity with the ways of such new lands; but as it is, he carries the Qur-án to his new converts, and must see that its injunctions are obeyed to the very letter. The same applies to the institutions of fasting and pilgrimage. If we abstain from eating, drinking, and other things during a certain month for a certain period every day, we are only following the Qur-án.

Some of the Indian Muslims, obsessed with the new ideas,

<sup>1</sup> Holy Qur-án, xxii. 26; iii. 190.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., xxii. 26; ix. 112; ii. 43.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., iii. 190.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., xxii. 26; ix. 112.

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come with the old, old plea of "the spirit"; they say that they follow the spirit and need not observe the letter—a meaningless phrase—a thing belied by their own conduct in other walks of life, since they cannot dispense with form; whatever they do, their actions assume a certain shape. The so-called "spirit" also needs some form of expression that will give shape to its thoughts and actions. So if this be indispensable, and they must adopt certain forms in the expression of this very "spirit" which they say they observe, then why should they give precedence to their own judgment on what it has pleased God to prescribe for us? We have to adopt certain postures while at our devotions, and why should Muslims be ruled by individual opinion, if the words of God are very clear on the point? In fact, these Indian friends unfortunately are too prone to be remiss in certain religious duties, and the word "spirit" is used as a sort of subterfuge for covering their own deficiencies. On the other hand, our new brethren in the Faith have accepted the Qur-án as the final word from God, for indeed the Book leaves no subject untouched. They have got the Qur-án in their own hands, and the Sacred Book lays down its every principle and tenet very clearly. It prescribes in most unambiguous language everything that constitutes religion. Why then go to Mr. A. or Mr. B. for enlightenment and not to the Qur-án?

As I have remarked, all our feelings need expression, whether in word or in gesture. In most cases these go together—the movement of the lips is accompanied by the movements of the eyes, the hands, and sometimes of the feet. If the tongue speaks, our hands move with it to intensify our meaning. Eyes are sometimes more eloquent than are articulated sounds. Just as these modes of indication are necessary on every plane of life, so they are essential in matters of devotion. For instance, the Hindoos stand or sit with legs crossed in their worship; Christians on such occasions stand, or kneel with eyes closed; the Jews recline, bow down, and observe different genuflexions; while the Chinese, the Tibetans, and some of the Hindoos place their foreheads on the earth in expression of obeisance. These forms were in vogue before Islam, and



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belong to the times when insurmountable natural barriers were separating one class of humanity from another. The Divine Dispensation at that time had blessed every nation with a religion which taught the special modes of devotion suitable for its own requirements. All these religions were fundamentally the same; they brought the same teachings, and the only difference lay in the ceremonial portions of the faith. But the ancient conditions changed. All natural or artificial barriers had become removed, and the people of the various nations and races were brought together. There was then a need for a universal religion, and Islam came to bring the different units of humanity under one flag. A universal form of prayer was needed, and in this is food for thought for such persons as, with genuine and honest motives, meditate the desirability of introducing changes into the formalism of Islam. They should not forget that Islam was meant for all those nations which were already in possession of their own form of worship. If Islam had come only, let us say for example, for Rome, we should follow the Roman ways perhaps even in our form of prayer. But a Muslim is a citizen of the whole world. His religion is cosmopolitan in character, and so should be his prayer. It should not prescribe a form unknown to one set of people while familiar to another. The Qur-án is a Book for the whole human race, and so it prescribes a form of prayer that may cover all the manifestations of pre-Islamic devotion and reduce them to one harmonious whole. Nations, as I said before, were accustomed to stand, to sit, to recline, to bow down, to prostrate themselves, and to raise their hands in their respective acts of worship. It was for Islam to prescribe a form of prayer that might comprehend all these various forms, which had indeed been the ways prescribed for different nations by the Lord of hosts in olden days; and the same Lord has now thought fit to string, as it were, all these separate beads into one Divine Rosary. Again, would it not prejudicially affect the uniformity of Islam if the Muslims in the West adopted one form of prayer while those in the East followed another course? It would be a most undesirable scene if the Occidental and the Oriental

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Muslims met together to worship one God and used two forms.

Moreover, forms of prayer act also as an index to the religion of the worshipper, and his gestures and genuflexions disclose his faith; so too it should be in Islam. We cannot, therefore, mould our prayers in a shape that might identify us with some other religion; nor is it for us to dictate our ways to other people. The Lord of nations has decided for us in the Qur-án.

The Qur-ánic words are too clear to allow of any differences of opinion. Even if it had not been so, the Holy Prophet translated and interpreted every Qur-ánic injunction through his actions. His sacred life is in itself the best commentary on the Qur-án. It is not only to the Arabic lexicon that we look for an interpretation of the meanings of the Holy Qur-án, but to the actual life of the Prophet itself, which has explained every Qur-ánic teaching—a fact to which the Qur-án has also referred.<sup>1</sup> It says that Muhammad not only brings the message of the Lord to the people, but also that his actions constitute its best exposition. In illustration I may here refer to one place in the Muslim prayer where we adopt a sitting posture. "*Quaod*" is the Arabic word in the text used for this, and "*Quada*" is the root of that word and means "sitting" in the particular manner which we Muslims adopt in our prayer. Furthermore, the Prophet himself showed us how we should sit when praying. Other ways of sitting during prayer were not unknown to the Prophet. He was aware that the Christians knelt upon their knees, and he also knew that the old Persians sat cross-legged when worshipping God, yet to explain the true meaning of the Qur-ánic words he placed himself in the posture which we adopt. The word primarily means sitting, but the Arabic lexicon and the action of the Prophet together specify the posture of sitting that we have to make use of in prayer. I appreciate the fact that certain postures in our prayer create some inconvenience to the new-comers under the flag of Islam; but conversion to a new order is generally not without hardship, let alone inconvenience. Conversion

<sup>1</sup> I xxxiii. 21.



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means destruction and construction—the giving up of a certain belief and certain modes of thought and action, and the adoption of new ones in their stead. Conversion causes a great revolution, a mental conflict sharp and ruthless, but honesty of conviction makes but little of all the inconveniences which that conviction entails. The inconvenience in question is in fact of no consequence, in comparison with the opposition which a new convert has to face when he gives up his old faith. To people in England I do not think that Islam presents much difficulty. They are the only religiously disposed people in the West. They belong to a religion that is full of conventionalities and ritual. Nay, their very life is shackled with forms and ceremonies. Whether at the table or in the toilet, whether in society or in church, every step of English life is burdened with conventions. Islam is to such a true emancipation. Can they reasonably complain of our postures in our prayers when they have to do a hundred and one similar things in their daily lives? It is true that it would be easier for them to worship the Lord in the forms to which they have been used; but if one has to respect old habits as such, then the next demand would be for a rasher of bacon and strong drink on the Muslim table. In short, Islam has done away with every sort of vain ceremonialism, retaining only such things as are indispensable.

There is yet another aspect of the question; I mean the mystic side of our prayer. We have to bring mind and body in unison with each other when at our devotions. We have to adopt such a posture as may give the mind that undisturbed scope for meditation which is in fact the very core of prayer. Habit plays a great part here. Some concentrate their mind when standing, others when sitting or in a particular posture, or when prostrate. Different temperaments favour different positions of the body. I experience a sort of aloofness from the world when I prostrate myself. Psychology—physiology recommends kneeling as the most suitable position for deep meditation. If this is the condition of the human mind, how can we stick to one form? Our prayer should comprehend all the postures that are favourable for concentration of mind

in different classes of people, and Islam has done this very thing. I could say a great deal more to substantiate my contentions; but in concluding this aspect of the subject I would simply observe—and especially to my Muslim brethren—that Islam in the technical sense means implicit submission to the teachings of the Qur-án. And if the Qur-án is so clear on a subject, how can we think otherwise?

### ALLEGED ATROCITIES OF THE PROPHET

By MAULANA MUHAMMAD 'ALĪ, M.A., LL.B.

*The Expansion of Islam*,<sup>1</sup> by William Cash, has an appendix of four pages in which the author has collected certain examples of what he calls "assassinations" carried out at the instigation of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, for which he calls him "cruel, treacherous, and relentless" (p. 19). With the exception of one, all these examples have been taken from Sir William Muir's *Life of Muhammad*, while a list of "original authorities" has been added to each incident. The cases of "assassination" are five in all, and to these is added the "massacre" of Banū Quraiza. The seventh example—the rape of the women of Banū Mustaliq—is a charge which is unknown even to Muir, and which the author has simply put in as a heading to defame the character of the Prophet, without citing any incident to show the Prophet's connection with it. Before I take up these cases individually, I think it necessary to throw some light on the value of the authorities cited by Mr. Cash.

The chief Arabic authorities cited, viz. Ibn Hishām, Wāqidī, Ibn Sa'd, Tabarī, and Halabī, are all books which fall under the heading of *sīrat* or *maghazi*. The two words were originally used interchangeably, and books on *sīrat* (properly biographies of the Prophet) were limited mostly to accounts of the battles fought by him or what may properly be called *maghazi*. These books are quite different from books on *hadīs* (or sayings, etc., of the Holy Prophet) which contain details of the law as

<sup>1</sup> London, 1928.



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promulgated by the Holy Prophet, though *hadīs* also contains an account of the battles fought or some other incidents of the Holy Prophet's life which throw light on doctrinal points. The *sīrat* and the *maghāzī*, i.e. the biographies, are later productions, and they were not subjected to the same critical test as *hadīs*. The collectors of tradition, *muhaddisīn*, are as a class quite distinct from the *arbābu 's-Sīyar* or biographers, and all Muslim authorities are agreed that the biographies are in point of trustworthiness much inferior to the collections of *hadīs*. Some biographies may be more reliable than others, but even the more reliable ones have not passed through the ordeal of criticism through which collections of *hadīs* have passed. On the other hand, everything that came to the biographers' hand, whether true or false, was passed on to the readers. Thus says Hāfiz Zainu 'd-Dīn 'Irāqī, to whom Ibn Hajr stands in the relation of a pupil: "Let the student know that the biographies contain what is true and what is false." Imām Ahmad bin Hanbal is even severer in his criticism of *maghāzī*, describing them as one of the three classes of books which "are not based on any principle." And as for Wāqidī's place among the biographers, he is the most untrustworthy of them all, and is generally known as a "liar."

The greatest error which European scholars are generally guilty of in dealing with Islam and the Prophet is that while they denounce *hadīs* as untrustworthy, they accept every story of the biographers as the very gospel truth, so long as it is damaging to the Prophet. All rules of criticism are here subjected to the one consideration that what is unfavourable to the Prophet must be true. I cannot here enter into a detailed discussion, but would only point out that while it is no doubt a difficult task to find out what is really untrue in the biographies, collections of *hadīs* can give us much help in sifting the truth from the error, because there is an unimpeachable authority in the Holy Qur-ān. This is a point which the European scholars have entirely neglected. It is an undeniable fact that the Qur-ān was the only source of guidance for the Holy Prophet, and he could not go against any of its directions. "I do not follow aught save that which is revealed to me,"

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the Prophet is made to say repeatedly in the Qur-án (vi. 50; vii. 203; x. 15; xlv. 9). And again: "I am commanded to be the first who submits" (vi. 14), or "I am the first of those who submit" (vi. 164). It goes further and says: "Surely I fear, if I disobey my Lord, the chastisement of a grievous day" (vi. 15; x. 15). From a Muslim's point of view, therefore, the Prophet could not go against the Holy Qur-án. But even a hostile critic cannot deny that Muhammad and the Qur-án must be in perfect agreement. From his point of view whatever the Prophet did, he "incorporated" into the Holy Qur-án, and this is the oft-repeated suggestion of Sir William Muir and other Western writers. We are again and again told that Muhammad produced such and such a revelation to justify a certain action which he had done. Whether he followed what was revealed to him or produced a certain verse to justify what he did, none of his actions could be read against the Holy Qur-án. If assassinations were carried out at his instigation or rape was committed under his directions, the Qur-án must legalize both assassination and rape; and if it does not legalize them, there can be no denying the conclusion that he never gave his sanction to these things.

It must be further borne in mind that to condemn any man on a charge there must be very strong evidence, to say nothing of condemning a man of the unique position of Muhammad, who laid down the basis of a world peace and a world brotherhood, who bore the severest persecutions for year after year and granted an unqualified pardon to all those persecutors when they were completely at his mercy, having been vanquished in battles, who released as many as six thousand prisoners of war on a single occasion without demanding a price of ransom, and whose deeds of magnanimity and generosity towards foe and friend are recorded in history by the hundred. One cannot understand the mentality of critics who would give every accused person the benefit of a doubt, but who are bold in condemning such a benefactor of humanity as Muhammad on the basis of an admittedly doubtful record—of record which is opposed to the testimony of an unimpeachable authority like the Qur-án.



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And let us now take individually the cases cited by Mr. Cash. Here we find that five out of the six alleged cases of assassination and the one case of "massacre" all relate to Jews. The Jews were "the people of the Book" and ordinarily the dealings of the Muslims with the people of the Book were much more lenient than their dealings with the Arab idolaters. How was it then that the people of the Book, people whose prophets were frequently mentioned with the utmost respect in the Holy Qur-án—how was it that these very people were chosen for assassination, and such crimes were not perpetrated against the Arab idolaters who had most relentlessly persecuted the Muslims for thirteen years at Mecca, and had now taken up the sword to deal a decisive blow at Medina? Sir William Muir and Mr. Cash assert that all these persons were murdered for no offence other than of composing verses "which annoyed the Mussalmans." Poetry was not a special vocation of the Jews, and verses abusing Islam and the Muslims were in much greater abundance produced by the idolatrous Arabs than the Jews. In fact, it was the Arab, not the Jew, whose particular vocation was poetry, and satire and abusive poetry were used as weapons to discredit and defame Islam specially by them. Sir William Muir wrote his *Life* in Christian missionary interest, and Mr. Cash has only copied him, and neither of them has taken the trouble of testing the reliability of the record on whose bases he has dared to condemn the most merciful and truest of men as cruel and treacherous. If they had gone to the root of the question, they would have found that the Prophet and the Muslims bore patiently the severest abuses and the annoying verses of all their opponents, whether Jews or idolaters. Indeed, the Holy Qur-án had plainly enjoined on them that they should bear all abuses patiently, whether they came from the idolaters or from the Jews and Christians. I quote only one verse belonging to a period when the Muslims had already entered on a state of war with their opponents: "And you shall certainly hear from those who have been given the Book before you, and from those who are polytheists, much abuse, and if you are patient and guard against evil, surely

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this is one of the affairs which should be determined upon " (iii. 185). This verse occurs in a chapter which contains an account of the battle of Uhud, fought in the 3rd year of Hejirah, and could not therefore have been revealed earlier than that year, and this is just the period to which most of the alleged assassinations relate. How was it possible for the Prophet and his followers to go directly against the plain injunction of the Holy Qur-án? As I have already said, the Prophet could not go against any Qur-ánic injunction, and the Qur-án says plainly, and says it at a time when war was going on with both the polytheistic Arabs and the Jews, that the Muslims shall have to bear much abuse, and they must not only bear the abuse patiently but should even guard against doing similar evil, to say nothing of murdering the abusers. How could the Prophet in the face of such a plain injunction order the murder of those who abused him, and how could the Muslims carry out an order which was directly opposed to the Holy Qur-án? It was simply impossible, and if Ibn Hishām or Wāqidī says that the Prophet ordered the assassination of his abusers, it is Ibn Hishām or Wāqidī—a frail authority after all—and not the Qur-án, which is admittedly the most reliable source of information as to the doings of the Prophet, that must be rejected. The Qur-án had allowed fighting against an aggressive enemy, yet it refused to give sanction to the murder of one who abused the Prophet and Islam; nay, it required plainly such abuse to be borne patiently. From a hostile critic's point of view, it is simply inconceivable that the Prophet should order the murder of people for annoying poems and, at the same time and in the same breath, forbid that abuse should be met with otherwise than bearing it patiently. What he should have done was when ordering such assassinations to produce a verse sanctioning the murder of abusers.

Let us now take the cases individually. The first case cited by Mr. Cash is that of Asma, of the tribe of Aus. She is said to have been a poetess who wrote some verses stating that the Prophet was an upstart who had slain many of their chiefs, referring to the battle of Badr. It is stated that she



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was brutally murdered for this abuse by a Muslim named 'Umair, and that the Prophet not only approved of this murder but also praised 'Umair for the deed. The authorities quoted are Wāqidī, Ibn Hishām, and Ibn Sa'd. That this is not a reliable record is not only shown by what has been stated above, that the Holy Qur-ān never allowed the murder of an abuser, but also by clear directions repeatedly given by the Holy Prophet that no woman was to be killed even though she took part in actual war with the Muslims. No less an authority than Bukhārī has a chapter on the "Murder of Women during War" (Kitābu 'l-Jihād) in which the following report from Ibn 'Umar is recorded: "A woman was found killed in one of the battles fought by the Holy Prophet, so the Holy Prophet forbade the killing of women and children." If the Prophet forbade the killing of women even when they were actually accompanying the enemy forces, how could he approve or applaud the killing of a woman for simply abusing or composing some annoying verses? Even the companions of the Prophet were so well aware of his strict orders against the killing of women that when Abu 'l-Huqaiq's wife interposed herself between them and Abu 'l-Huqaiq they had to withhold their raised swords "because they remembered that the Holy Prophet had forbidden the killing of a woman" (*Fathu 'l-Bārī*, ch. Killing of Abu 'l-Huqaiq). In the face of this clear testimony, none but a biased mind can accept as reliable a report which relates that the Holy Prophet had ordered and applauded the killing of a woman simply for the offence that she composed annoying verses. I have no hesitation in calling such a report a baseless forgery.

While dealing with the alleged murder of Asma, I have shown that the Holy Prophet gave a clear interdiction against the murder of women even in wars. In this connection I have quoted a saying of the Holy Prophet from the most reliable traditionist of Islam, the Imām Bukhārī. The heading under which Bukhārī quotes this saying is "Murder of Women during Wars," thus showing that the interdiction against the murder of women was to be observed even in wars. Bukhārī is not alone in reporting the incident and the interdiction; it is

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contained in all the books of the *Sihāh Sitta* (the six reliable collections) with the exception of only one, and therefore its authenticity is beyond dispute. Not only this interdiction is accepted as a basic principle by later jurists. Thus according to Mālik and Auza'ee, the killing of women and children is not allowed under any circumstances whatsoever, and according to Shāfi'i and the Kūfis a woman may be killed only when she is a combatant, while according to one authority, even when a woman is a combatant it is not lawful to kill her intentionally unless she is about to kill or attacks a man with the intention of killing him ('Aunu 'l-Ma'būd, *Commentary on Abū Dāwūd*, ch. Murder of Women). According to Mālik and Auza'ee, however, as already stated, a woman should not be killed under any condition, so much so that if a fighting force takes the shelter of women and children or takes shelter in a fort or a boat in which there are also women and children with them, it is not lawful to shoot at or set fire to the fort or the boat (*Fathu 'l-Bārī*, ch. Ahlu 'd-Dāri yabītūn). In the face of these facts it is simply unthinkable that the Prophet should have ordered the assassination of a *woman*, under peaceful conditions, for no other fault than singing certain annoying verses.

The next incident related by Mr. Cash is that relating to the alleged assassination of Abū Afak, "an aged Jewish proselyte, whose offence was similar to that of Asma." I have no hesitation in calling this story as baseless a fabrication as that relating to the murder of Asma. My reason for doing this is that the interdiction against the murder of women also included two other classes, viz. children and old men. It is true that the saying of the Prophet as reported in the Bukhārī mentions only women and children, and not aged persons, but there is a tradition in *Abū Dāwūd* (ch. Du'aū 'l-Mushrikīn) reported by Anas, son of Mālik, according to which the Holy Prophet said: "Do not kill an aged person, nor a child, nor a minor, nor a woman." That the Prophet expressly forbade the killing of old men appears also from the directions given by Abū Bakr, the first Caliph, to Yazīd, son of Abū Sufyān, when he sent him in command of an army to Syria. In the



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directions given to him the following relate to our subject: "Do not kill children, nor women, nor old men" (*Fathu 'l-Qadīr*, vol. v, p. 202). It is clear that Abū Bakr could give such directions only on the authority of the Holy Prophet. Hence there was an interdiction against the killing of old men, as there was against the killing of women. And it is impossible, I repeat, that the Holy Prophet should have given such clear injunctions and then himself ordered the killing of "an aged Jewish proselyte," as Abū Afak is said to have been, and for no offence but that he composed some annoying verses.

In fact, as the *Hidāya* has put it clearly, a person's life—unless he is a murderer—cannot be taken on any ground other than that he is a combatant: "And they should not kill a woman, nor a child, nor an aged person, nor one who does not take part in a war, nor a blind man, because what makes it lawful to take a man's life, according to us, is his being a combatant, and this is not true in their case" (ch. Kaifiyyatu-'l-Qitāl). In fact, this conclusion, which is the basic principle of the Hanifite law, is based on the express words of the Holy Prophet himself. As Abū Dāwūd reports on the authority of Rabah, son of Rabī': "We were with the Prophet in a certain battle, and he saw the people gather together in one place. So he sent a man to make an inquiry as to why the people had gathered together. The messenger came back and said, 'There is a woman killed.' The Holy Prophet said, '*She was not fighting.*' The reporter says that Khālid was leading at the time. So the Prophet sent a man to Khālid and asked him to tell Khālid that he should not kill a woman nor a hireling" (ch. Qatlu'n-Nisā). By remarking that "she was not fighting," the Holy Prophet made it plain that even in battle only such persons could be killed as actually took part in fighting, and along with women he excepted hirelings, because they were only hired for other work and did not take part in actual fighting. It is on this basis that the Hanifite law excepts, along with women, children, and old men, all such persons as cannot take part in fighting. And the conclusion is inevitable that according to the Holy Prophet's own injunctions the killing of a person was not lawful unless he took part in

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fighting, and any report to the effect that a person was killed though he was not a combatant is either untrue or defective, even if it is met with in a reliable collection of traditions. And as for biographies, I have already said that they cannot be trusted at all in such matters, and the case of Ibn Sunaina's murder must be rejected as untrue. The circumstance that this murder was due to the Prophet giving a general order for the slaughter of the Jews is sufficient to discredit this report, for not only would such an order be against the clear injunctions of the Holy Qur-án, but also because if such an order were given it would not have resulted in the murder of a single Jew.

I must here add that the Prophet's express injunction not to kill even in a battle anyone who was not a combatant though he may be with a fighting army is based on the Holy Qur-án itself. For when the permission was given to the Muslims to take up the sword, it was given in the express words that none but a fighter should be fought against: "And fight in the way of God with those who fight with you, and do not exceed this limit, for God does not love those who exceed the limits" (ii. 190). And to the same effect, we have elsewhere: "Permission is given to those on whom war is made because they are oppressed" (xxii. 39). It was in obedience to these Divine commandments that the Holy Prophet gave the direction that women, children, and old men were not to be killed even in the battles because they were not combatants, and hence no non-combatant could be killed unless, of course, he was guilty of murder, for which the Holy Qur-án has an express provision: "Retaliation is prescribed for you in the matter of the slain" (ii. 178). Thus both the Holy Qur-án and the Holy Prophet's sayings lay down as a clear rule that the life of a person can be taken only if he is either a murderer or a combatant, and it is under one of these two heads that all these cases fall in which the Prophet ordered the killing of a person.

I now come to the genuine cases which are mentioned in collections of traditions. The first of these is the case of Ka'b bin Ashraf. I propose to discuss it in detail, for this one



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case would show how the Holy Prophet has been misrepresented. Ka'b's father belonged to the tribe of Tayy, but coming over to Medina he became an ally of the Jewish tribe of Banū Nazīr and became so influential that he succeeded in marrying the daughter of a Jewish leader. Ka'b thus stood in a very near relationship to both the Jews and the Arabs. When the Holy Prophet came to Medina, the Jews made an agreement with him, by the terms of which the Jews and the Muslims were to live as one people, both retaining their own faith, and in the case of an attack on Medina or an unaggressive war with a third party they bound themselves to help each other. The Prophet was accepted as the final court of appeal in all disputes. When, however, a Meccan army advanced on Medina in the 2nd year of Hejirah, the Muslims had to meet them alone, and notwithstanding that they were less than a third of the Meccan army and very inferior in efficiency and arms, they inflicted a crushing defeat on the invading army at Badr. The Muslim victory only added to the Jewish spite against Islam. Ka'b, who was bound by the Medina treaty, now used his poetic gift freely to excite hatred of Islam and the Muslims. Not content with this, he proceeded to Mecca and openly joined hands with the enemies of Islam. He urged upon the Quraish the necessity of attacking Medina with a strong force at an early date, and swore in the Ka'ba that he would fight against the Muslims when Medina was invaded. Not only this; he returned from Mecca with a plan to put an end to the Prophet's life by underhand means. It is only in the true Christian missionary spirit that Muir, in his *Life of Mahomet*, has no place for these facts while he has sufficient room for the minutest details as to how Ka'b was put to death, and he gives vent to his inner feelings when he concludes his description of one of these "assassinations" in the following words:—

"The progress of Islam begins to stand out in unenviable contrast with that of early Christianity. Converts were gained to the faith of Jesus by witnessing the constancy with which its confessors suffered death; they were gained to Islam by the spectacle of the readiness with which its adherents inflicted

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death. In the one case conversion imperilled the believer's life; in the other, it was the only means of saving it."

And if Muir concealed the facts which show that from an ally Ka'b had turned into a combatant, Mr. Cash, notwithstanding his parading the original authorities, is guilty of the same offence. That there was a war between the Muslims and the non-Muslims at the time of the alleged "assassination," in the third year of the Hejirah, is an undeniable fact. The question is whether Ka'b was among the combatants or the non-combatants. If he actually joined hands with the enemies of Islam and placed himself among those who were fighting with the Muslims, and he was killed by the Muslims, can this be called a case of treachery, cruelty, or butchery? That Ka'b had openly joined the combatants and become their ally is borne out by all historical accounts; nay, some of them go so far as to say that he had planned to murder the Holy Prophet treacherously. I give here some quotations:—

"He went to the Quraish, weeping over their killed (at Badr) and inciting them to fight with the Prophet" (Zurqānī, vol. ii, p. 10).

(The Prophet said) "He (Ka'b) has openly assumed enmity to us and speaks evil of us and he has gone over to the polytheists (who were at war with the Muslims) and has made them gather against us for fighting" (Zurqānī, vol. ii, p. 11).

"And according to Kalbī, he united in a league with the Quraish before the curtains of the Ka'ba to fight against the Muslims" (Zurqānī, vol. ii, p. 11).

"And he prepared a feast, and conspired with some Jews that he would invite the Prophet, and when he came they should fall on him all of a sudden" (Zurqānī, vol. ii, p. 12).

Commenting on Bukhārī's report relating to the killing of Ka'b, the author of *Fathu 'l-Bārī* relates the reports which I have quoted above from Zurqānī, viz. Ka'b's going to Mecca and inciting the Quraish, entering into a league before the curtains of the Ka'ba to fight against the Muslims, the Prophet's declaration that he had assumed open enmity, and his plan to kill the Prophet by inviting him to a feast. Bukhārī himself speaks of the incidents relating to the killing

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of Ka'b under headings in which the word *harb* (fighting) occurs, thus showing that he was looked upon as a combatant. Abū Dāwūd speaks of the incident under the heading "When the enemy is attacked and he is unprepared," showing that Ka'b was dealt with as an enemy at war with the Muslims. And the comment on this is that "Ka'b used to incite people to murder the Muslims"; and discussing the legality of what the party sent out for the punishment of Ka'b did, the same commentator adds: "This is not allowed in the case of an enemy after security has been given to him or peace has been made with him . . . but it is allowed in the case of one who breaks the covenant and helps others in the murder of Muslims." And Ibn Sa'd tells us that when the Jews complained to the Holy Prophet that their leader was killed, "he reminded them of his deeds and how he urged and incited (the Quraish) to fight against them," and adds that the Prophet then "called upon them to make an agreement with him," and this agreement "was afterwards in the possession of 'Ali." All this evidence is too clear to show that Ka'b was put to death for having broken the agreement with the Prophet and joined his enemies who were at war with him, and he was therefore treated as a combatant, while the other Jews who did not go to this length, though they were not less active in speaking evil of the Holy Prophet, still lived at peace with him, and all that they were required to do was to sign an agreement that they would not join hands with those who were at war with the Muslims.

The only question that is worth considering is why Ka'b was put to death by certain Muslims attacking him suddenly and unawares. In the first place, it must be clearly understood that the responsibility as to the manner in which he was put to death does not at all lie with the Prophet. That the Prophet considered Ka'b as deserving death is quite true, but there is no proof at all that he gave any directions as to the manner in which that sentence was to be carried out. On the other hand, according to one report, when the Prophet was asked by Muhammad bin Maslamah whether he should kill him he assumed silence, while according to another he said:



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“ If you are going to do it, be not in a hurry until you have consulted Sa’d bin Mu’āz ” (Zurqānī, vol. ii, p. 12). At any rate he knew nothing about the details, and it is even doubtful whether the details as given are true, and on this point even Muir has his doubts. But supposing that all these details are true, the Holy Prophet had nothing to do with them. And leaving aside the question of the Prophet’s responsibility, there was no other method to which resort could be had under the circumstances. The hostile critic takes it for granted that the conditions under which the Muslims lived at Medina were very like those under which he lives in the twentieth century. They had to deal with an enemy, and they dealt with him in the only way in which it was possible to proceed under the circumstances as then existing.

From what I have said above, it is clear that Ka’b had along with the Jews at first entered into an agreement of alliance with the Muslims, but had later become inimical to them, and ultimately entered into a league with their enemies to annihilate the Muslims and their Prophet. From a peaceful citizen he had turned into an open combatant, and had even tried to kill the Prophet by treachery. As such he deserved death, and the only question is whether there was any treachery or cruelty on the part of the Muslims to have killed him unawares. The only other way open to them was to obtain a judgment in their favour in some constituted court of justice and then have him beheaded by some constituted authority. But constituted authority there was practically none at Medina, and if there was, it was the Prophet himself, because he was the head to whom all disputes should be finally referred according to the agreement entered into by the different communities at the Prophet’s advent, and therefore this course was impossible. Nor could the Muslims, if they had the least care for their own lives, wait and sit silent, as, living in Medina, Ka’b could work the greatest mischief and all the time be immune from punishment. The Prophet was a spiritual teacher, no doubt, but he was also a general, and he had to act like a far-sighted general to protect the Muslims against the evil designs of an enemy who, living within Medina, could

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work immense mischief if he was not dealt with promptly. Ka'b had chosen to enter into a league with an enemy at war with the Muslims, and according to all human and Divine laws he could not but be treated as an enemy at war. And dealing with him as a combatant, the Holy Prophet sent a party against him; it is definitely called a *sariyya* (lit., *a portion of an army*) in all biographical works, thus showing that the party was sent to fight with him; but it rested with the leader of the party to choose the best way in which he could deal a blow at the enemy. And Muhammad bin Maslama, the leader, chose a method which was recognized among the Arabs, and I have no doubt that similar methods are adopted even to-day by civilized nations and go under the name of "effective" measures of dealing with the enemy. I am sure that if a civilized Government had to round up a dacoit to-day it would do it by similar methods. Nay, if necessary it would bomb peaceful citizens along with a culprit. If the leader of the party had chosen to attack Ka'b openly, there would have been much more bloodshed, and probably the whole Jewish tribe of Banū Nazīr would have suffered along with Ka'b. Ka'b had broken his agreement with the Prophet, he had revolted against him, he had entered into a league to fight against the Muslims till they were extirpated and he had secretly planned to take away the Prophet's life. For every one of these offences he had forfeited his life. A party was sent to execute this decree, and his life was taken in a manner which, if it had the fault of being secret, had also the merit of not involving innocent people along with the culprit, which would surely have been the result in the case of an open attack; but the Holy Prophet was not in any way responsible for the method of the execution.

Having discussed the case of Ka'b at length, the case of Abu 'l-Huqaiq (Abu Rāfi') need not detain us long. In fact, Muir has admitted his guilt with a suppressed tongue. Thus under the heading "Assassination of Abu 'l-Huqaiq, a Jewish Chief," he says:—

"A party of the Bani Nadhīr, after their exile, settled down among their brethren at Khaibar. Abul Hukeick, their

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chief, having taken a prominent part in the confederate force which besieged Medina, was now suspected of encouraging certain Bedouin tribes in their depredations. An expedition was therefore undertaken by Ali against the Jews of Khaibar. . . . As a surer means of stopping these attacks, Mahomet resolved on ridding himself of their supposed author, the Jewish chief." And we are further told that "the assassination of Abul Hukeick did not relieve Mahomet of his apprehensions from the Jews of Khaibar; for Oseir, elected in his room, maintained the same relation with the Ghatafan, and was even reported to be designing fresh movements against Medina." The Banū-Nazīr, a Jewish tribe, originally lived at Medina, and were in alliance with the Holy Prophet, but being suspected of keeping up correspondence with the Quraish, and one of the Arab tribes in alliance with them having murdered some Muslims treacherously, they were asked to renew the alliance, which they refused, and were ultimately banished from Medina. They settled at Khaibar, a Jewish stronghold, and became a source of immense trouble to the Muslims, constantly inciting the tribes around Medina to commit depredations on the Muslims. Abu 'l-Huqaiq, their head, was also a leader in the battle of the allies in which the Arabian and Jewish tribes had gathered together to give a crushing blow to Islam. Abu 'l-Huqaiq and the Jews had thus come out into the field of battle against the Muslims, and even after the allies had to go back in discomfiture, Abu 'l-Huqaiq continued to excite and help the Arab tribes living around Medina in their depredations against the Muslims. The Prophet was thus justified in sending an expedition against the Khaibar Jews, but before doing this in the 7th year of Hejirah, he sent a small party to deal with Abu 'l-Huqaiq alone in 6 A.H. Undoubtedly the underlying idea was that bloodshed might be avoided as far as possible, and that if the ringleader was taken away, the mischief might cease. But even Abu 'l-Huqaiq's death did not bring peace to the Muslims, and accordingly Khaibar had ultimately to be attacked and conquered. That the party sent against him chose to adopt the method which was successfully adopted against Ka'b, again throws no blame on the Prophet.



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The case of Banū Quraiza is dealt with in the Holy Qur-án in connection with the battle of the allies in the following words:—

“ And He drove down those of the followers of the Book who backed them from their fortresses and He cast awe into their hearts: Some (of them) you killed, and you took captive another part. And He made you heirs to their land and their dwellings and their property, and to a land which you have not yet trodden, and God has power over all things ” (xxxiii. 26, 27).

Originally there were three Jewish tribes living at Medina: Banū Qainuqa', Banū Nazīr, and Banū Quraiza. All three tribes, as stated already, entered into an alliance with the Muslims when the Holy Prophet first came to Medina, by which the two parties were bound to help each other in the case of an unaggressive war or an attack on Medina. But none of the three Jewish tribes remained faithful to the agreement. They did not remain even neutral. The Banū Qainuqa' were the first to break with the Muslims. As Ibn Hishām has it: “ The Banū Qainuqa' were the first Jewish tribe to violate the agreement which was made between them and the Prophet of God, and they declared war against him between the battles of Badr and Uhud.” They were besieged and ultimately agreed to submit to the Prophet's decision, and their banishment from Medina was the result. This happened in the second year of Hejirah. Soon afterwards it was discovered that both the other Jewish tribes were in secret alliance with the enemies of Islam, and accordingly the Holy Prophet required them to renew their agreement. The Banū Quraiza agreed to this but the Banū Nazīr refused. They were besieged, and ultimately submitted to banishment and settled at Khaibar.

The 5th year of Hejirah was a time of sore trial for the small Muslim community at Medina. The activities of the Quraish and the Jews resulted in uniting numerous Arab tribes against the Muslims, and an army of between ten and twenty-five thousand besieged Medina. The Muslims, who did not number more than two or three thousand, defended themselves by digging a trench. It was the most critical time in the life of the Muslim community. The Holy Qur-án thus describes

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the situation: "When they came upon you from above you and from below you, and when the eyes turned dull, and the hearts rose up to the throats, and you began to think diverse thoughts of God" (xxxiii. 10). The Banū Quraiza were guilty of the most heinous treachery at this juncture. I would only quote Muir:—

"Meanwhile, Abu Sofian succeeded in detaching the Bani Coreitza, now the only remaining Jewish tribe, from their allegiance to Mahomet. Huwey, the exiled Jew and ally of the Coreish, sent by him to their fortress, was at first refused admittance. But, persevering in his solicitations, dwelling upon the ill-concealed enmity of Mahomet towards the Jews at large, and representing the overwhelming numbers of the confederate army as 'a surging sea,' he at last persuaded Ka'b, their chief, to relent. It was agreed that the Coreitza would assist the Coreish, and that Huwey should retire into their fortress in case the allies marched back without inflicting a fatal blow upon Medina. Rumours of this defection reaching Mahomet, he sent the two Sa'ds, chiefs of the Aus and Khazraj, to ascertain the truth, and strictly charged them, if the result should prove unfavourable, to divulge it to none other but himself. They found the Coreitza in a sullen mood. 'Who is Mahomet,' said they, 'and who is the Apostle of God, that we should obey him? There is no bond or compact betwixt us and him.' After high words and threats, the messengers took their leave, and reported to Mahomet that the temper of the Jews was worse even than he had feared."

The treachery on the part of Banū Quraiza is one of the blackest deeds that history records. Only imagine what would have been the fate of the Muslims if they had succeeded! Therefore when the besieging army took to flight and the Quraiza returned to their fortress, it was besieged by the Holy Prophet. After twenty-five days they made an offer of submitting to the judgment of Sa'd bin Mu'az, because he was the chief of the Aus tribe, with whom they were in alliance before the Prophet came to Medina. The Holy Prophet accepted their offer, and Sa'd's decision was that the combatants from among the Banū Quraiza should be put to death

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and the non-combatants reduced to slavery. The Christian critics of the Holy Prophet call the execution of this judgment an act of cruelty, while the Jews themselves had no complaint against it. And how could they call it cruel when the judgment was based on the express words of their own law, which prescribes the following course in the case of a town which makes war and is besieged:—

“ And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it:

“ And when the Lord thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword;

“ But the women and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself ” (Deut. xx. 12–14).

We are not aware what reasons led Sa'd to give his judgment. It may be that, being their ally, he inquired of the Jews as to how they would act under similar circumstances, and when he came to know what their own sacred law was, he gave his judgment in accordance with it. Or, perhaps on account of his erstwhile relations with them, he already knew their law. Leaving aside the heinous deed of treachery of which they were guilty, it is clear that if they had triumphed over the Muslims they would have dealt with them exactly in the same manner. The Jews would not call it cruel, nor should even the Christians, because even they consider it a revealed law. The punishment may seem severe at this distant date, though ten thousand times more blood may be shed in one civilized war of the present age, but exigencies of national existence do sometimes require an exemplary punishment. This was the second act of treachery on the part of Banū Nazir; it was committed at a time when the Muslim national existence was in danger of being swept off entirely; the judgment was delivered by a man whom the Jews had themselves chosen as an arbiter; the judgment given was in accordance with their own law; and that law was considered by them to be a Divine law. How can the Prophet be blamed for it?

Mr. Cash's last charge against the Holy Prophet, i.e. having



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allowed rape of the women of Banū Mustaliq, is one of the most grievous calumnies that have been uttered. And the allegation that "all the Tradition Books" mention it is bolder still. *I challenge Mr. Cash to produce testimony from a single collection of Traditions establishing the charge—a charge of which even a hostile writer like Muir is unaware.* The only thing that is met with in the collections of Traditions is a report from Abu Sa'id Khudari that some people in the Muslim army *intended* contracting temporary marriage relations with some women who were prisoners of war and making use of a birth-control device, but there is not the least evidence that they ever did it. Abu Sa'id's report, in fact, relates to the legality of 'azl, a birth-control device, and it does not say at all how the women of Banū Mustaliq were treated. It is a fact that before the advent of Islam, temporary marriage relations were allowed. The Holy Qur-án put an end to them, but all reform was, and ought to have been, gradual. The Qur-án is explicit on marriage with the prisoners of war, and the verse quoted below is a clear rebuttal of Mr. Cash's unfounded charge:—

"And whoever among you has not within his power ampleness of means to marry free believing women, then he may marry of those whom your right hands possess from among your believing maidens . . . so marry them with the permission of their masters, and give them their dowries justly, they being chaste, not fornicating, nor receiving paramours; and when they are taken in marriage, then if they are guilty of indecency they shall suffer half the punishment which is inflicted upon free women. This is for him among you who fears falling into evil; and that you abstain is better for you, and God is Forgiving, Merciful" (iv. 25).

As regards the treatment of the women of Banū Mustaliq in particular, there is the clearest historical evidence in all Tradition Books that they were all set free without demanding any ransom, because one of them, Juwairiyya, was set free and married by the Holy Prophet.

## EUROPE'S DEBT TO ISLAM

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By DR. GUSTAV DIERCKS, PH.D.

(Continued from "*Islamic Review*," p. 453, December, 1928.)

MUHAMMAD—the name means "the Blessed"—or Abu 'l-Qāsim, called after his eldest son, Qāsim, was born on the 20th April, 571 A.D. His father, 'Abdu 'l-Lāh, as well as his mother Āmina, came of the prominent and ruling family of the Quraish in Mecca, but of a branch that had become impoverished. 'Abdu 'l-Lāh died shortly before or soon after the birth of Muhammad, and left his wife and child in so distressing circumstances that Āmina had the greatest difficulty in finding a wet-nurse for the delicate child, who, early in his third year, had to be brought back from the desert. On the death of Āmina very shortly afterwards, the child's grandfather, 'Abdu 'l-Muttalib, took charge of him, and after his death, his uncle Abū Tālib. During his stay with his uncle, Muhammad worked as a shepherd, a camel-driver, and a water-carrier, and in these capacities made many journeys in Arabia and as far as the Syrian boundaries, and thus assimilated in his early years a great variety of extraneous impressions. These were destined to exercise a powerful influence upon him as he grew up; for Muhammad possessed an exceptionally vigorous, brisk, and facile power of perception.

For the rest, very little is known about the days of his youth. It is first at the age of twenty-five that he reappears, in the service of a rich widow, Khadija. It was his duty to travel for her extensively in the course of her business, and, inasmuch as all his journeys ended very prosperously, the forty-year-old lady Khadija gradually took more active interest in him than before, an interest which presently found expression in her marriage with her employee. From now on Muhammad does not appear to be greatly interested in things commercial, rather preferring to indulge his passion for contemplation which had caused him often, and for a long period of time, to withdraw from the town and, sometimes with Khadija, sometimes alone, to seek the aloofness of the desert.

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The chaotic and unstable condition of religious and political affairs in the Arabian peninsula, combined with the rapid and widespread penetration of Byzantine and Persian rule into Arabia, urged upon him the idea of the thorough reform of all the Arabian tribes and of their unification into one single nation; a high purpose which was to make of him that which he ultimately became. In his fortieth year he believed himself to have beheld the Angel Gabriel, who brought him the revelation of the Most High and commanded him to promulgate it to men. Because from the first he had made it known that he would utterly destroy and root out idolatry, and because through this policy of his he threatened to jeopardize and actually to injure the material interests of the Quraish who controlled the service of the Ka'ba and many other lucrative privileges connected with it, he met with relentless opposition, accompanied by derision and mockery, which seemed as if it would completely blight all his efforts at their very outset. Semitic pertinacity in pursuit of a set purpose, backed in this case by fanatical enthusiasm for an ideal in the fulfilment of which there seemed to him to lie the sole hope for the welfare and safety of the people to which he belonged, manifests itself in Muhammad more markedly than the opposition of the ruling classes of the Meccan population had bargained for. Undaunted, with the most complete confidence in his sacred cause, and in his call as the promulgator of the heavenly revelation, he courageously continued his efforts although his followers during the first years were limited to a few individuals of his household and his relatives. But when two prominent Meccans, Abū Bakr and 'Osmān, accepted the teachings of Muhammad; when the young, active, and enthusiastic idealist 'Alī came over to the side of the Prophet, the attitude of the governing parties of Mecca towards the brave reformer and the forty followers whom he had won over during the first year of his call became so alert and threatening that Muhammad himself, it seemed for the moment, had a qualm of indecision as to whether or not it would be prudent for him to measure his strength with opponents so vastly more powerful. As soon, however, as it became known that the latter



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were hard at work plotting against the life of Muhammad (as a result of which a number of his relatives espoused his cause), he once more took his old courage in his hands and began to preach against idolatry with an ever-increasing boldness. The fundamental teachings of Moses and of Christianity, which formed the basis of his teaching, and which, it may be remarked in passing, he had learnt through oral traditions, not from the respective Scriptures, because he could neither read nor write, were moulded by him in such a way as to appear both national and individualistic.<sup>1</sup> He laid stress, in the first place, on the Unity of God and His Immateriality, whence resulted, in contrast to the worship of pictures as practised by the Byzantine Christians which had sunk into gross fetishism, the strict interdiction of pictorial representations not only of the divine but of all living objects. The conscientiously guiding principles of Muhammad were throughout his life only of the purest and the noblest, simply because they aimed at nothing else but the welfare of the Arabian people. The very fact that Muhammad, later on, was called upon to play the rôle of a prophet does not entitle anyone to brand him as liar or impostor. What Islam had achieved and is achieving even now in Asia, in Africa, and elsewhere, the good and wholesome effect it has produced and is producing, should certainly protect every thinker, everyone who has so much as dabbled even in the history of other religions, from smirching the memory of one who in energy, idealism, and enthusiasm has no recorded parallel. If he used practical means, if he availed himself cleverly of the peculiar conditions of soil and climate, as well as of the nature of the inhabitants of Arabia, he did nothing

<sup>1</sup> The writer is a non-Muslim, and cannot, it seems, in common with European Orientalists, understand that Muhammad did not at all stand in need of basing his teachings on Judaism and Christianity. The very fact that his teachings resemble those of Moses and Jesus so much does not necessarily go to prove that he must have borrowed them from his predecessors. The truth is that the source of Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad is one and the same. They all had their inspiration from the Most High. It is a mistake due to the lack of understanding of the phenomenon of revelation that invariably one comes across the observation that Muhammad borrowed from his predecessors. This idea was strengthened by a book—Geiger, *Was hat Muhammad aus dem Judenthum aufgenommen?* (ED. I.R.).

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other than what, for example, every capable politician, every priest of all time, has done; what missionaries are compelled to do to-day, if they want to achieve any practical result. Human ideals have always—more or less—been the children of human selfishness and egoism. Everything of note, and worth mentioning, which mankind has done has always been the result of an appeal to human weaknesses, passions, and interests; never has it arisen from motiveless and metaphysical ideals. For the ideals of Muhammad were, first and last, practical. The means by which he sought to realize them were strictly practical means, and the means most suitable to the prevailing conditions. And herein lies the secret of the miraculous success of his teachings. The followers of other religions can never forgive him this success, because they are envious of it. And what is more, they forget the history alike of their own and other religions, and scrupulously avoid a scrutiny of their foundations. They are always, with horror and reprobation, accusing Islam of those same practical methods which they themselves have made too good use of. The fear of punishment and the hope of happiness hereafter have been the powerful moulding factors of all the religions of the world.

But to return to Muhammad. His bold front exasperated his opponents more than ever, and the steps they took became in the end so drastic, especially after they had, so to say, placed a ban on the Prophet and his followers as heterodox and traitors to religion, that some of the believers, on the advice of Muhammad, had to fly from Mecca and he himself thought it prudent to betake himself to Tā'if, in the hope of finding support there. Disillusioned, he had to return to Mecca, where, in the meantime, Khadija and Abū Tālib, who were dearest and closest to his heart, had died. But soon—namely, in his fifty-first year—the events of his life took a turn for the better. The Prophet had succeeded in winning over a few of the inhabitants of Yathrib—later called Medina—and because the Medinites, who had, from time immemorial, been jealous of the Meccans, felt themselves to some extent in duty bound, as being the relatives of Āmina, to assist her son, and especially

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because they hoped through the help of the latter and his teachings to achieve considerable advantages for themselves at the cost of the Meccans, they asked Muhammad to take refuge in their town. Now when the Prophet found out that he could no longer successfully withstand the opposition of his opponents, he, after having sent on all his followers in advance and received tidings of their safety, decided on the 13th September, 622 A.D., on flight, which date has rightly been considered by Muslims to be epoch-making and the beginning or starting-point for their own chronology.

After his flight to Medina, Muhammad had to devote his special attention to the building-up, the consolidating, and the diffusion of the teachings of Islam. For this, before all, it was necessary that, on the one hand, all those who had already been won over to the cause of Islam should remain loyal—for this purpose pecuniary resources were essential—and that, on the other hand, the masses of the Arab population must be converted—and for this, in the first place, the subjugation of his opponents, the Meccans, was most necessary; for “eloquence, charitableness, and valour ” were the qualities which the Arabs appreciated most.

In 624 A.D. there was an open battle between 300 Muslims and 900 Meccans, near Badr, a place rich in wells, and lying nearer Medina than Mecca. The victory of the Muslims in this battle was, apart from the rich booty which fell into their hands, of very great importance to the cause of Islam; for it went a long way towards raising Muslim prestige in the eyes of all Arabia, as well as bringing with it a host of new followers. The Meccans could not leave this defeat unavenged, and there ensued another battle near Ohud, where the Muslims were defeated and suffered heavy losses. Therefore, when in 627 A.D. 10,000 Meccans marched against him, Muhammad did not come out into the open to fight them. The resulting siege proved fruitless and the Meccans had to retire empty-handed. Then, in the year 628 A.D., Muhammad decided on a bold step. He himself undertook a journey to Mecca, to perform the pilgrimage during the holy months, together with a company of 700 to 1,400 Muslims. He was not permitted to enter the



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city, although the Meccans did not dare to use force in excluding him. A treaty not unfavourable for Muhammad was then arranged, according to which permission was given to him to perform the pilgrimage in the following year, and a ten years' truce was concluded between him and the Meccans. Even if Muhammad did not achieve that which he set out for, the moral influence of this treaty, which recognized the Muslims as an equal power, was of inestimable importance to the cause of the Prophet, and enhanced his prestige among all the Arabian tribes. From now on Muhammad was determined to spread Islam beyond the frontiers of Arabia; he therefore sent letters to the Byzantine Emperor Heraklius, to Chosroes II of Persia, to the King of Abyssinia, and to the Governors of Egypt and other petty princes, inviting them to embrace Islam. While most of them paid no attention to the letter, 'Amru, the Christian Arab chieftain of the Ghassanid Kingdom, who was under the suzerainty and protection of the Byzantine Emperor, killed the envoy of Muhammad and challenged the Prophet, though this act of his led to a battle which was the first occasion on which the Muslims came in conflict with Byzantium. The indecisiveness of this expedition, which was more like a defeat than a victory, set the Arabian opponents of the Prophet in motion once more. Muhammad, on his part, utilized the breach of contract of which the Meccans had been guilty, by setting out to conquer Mecca. In the year 629 A.D. he marched against Mecca at the head of 10,000 Muslims. The city had to open its gates to him, and surrendered without striking a blow. Immediately, and with disdain, he abolished the bloody custom of revenge, of which he, according to all Arabian war ethics, was then entitled to take the fullest advantage; and in the Temple he destroyed the statues of the principal idol, Hubul, as well as all other idols which were standing there. In short, he introduced Islam into Ka'ba, and the citizens straightway accepted the new faith. After Muhammad had gained yet another victory over Tā'if, in the valley of Hunain, in 631 A.D., practically all the Arabian tribes had voluntarily surrendered themselves to him.

On his return to Medina his first desire was to lead an

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expedition against Byzantium; but while preparations were still in progress, death overtook him on the 8th July, 632 A.D.

Now, we have to ask ourselves, what was it which made Muhammad exert such an extraordinarily preponderant influence and achieve in his dealings with the Arabs such an unusual measure of success that in a proportionately small period of time the whole of Arabia bent itself to his will? He himself was an Arab from top to toe. Certainly he was no poet, and never sought to pass as one. But, in place of poetical genius, he was endowed with eloquence powerful, captivating, at times overwhelming, which, backed by zealous enthusiasm and fervour, made an impression on the Bedouins even deeper than that which the words of a poet might have created. He was, furthermore, essentially a brave man, and this went far towards acquiring for him the respect of the Arabs; for fearlessness, intrepidity, and manly courage were among the qualities which the Arabs honoured most. He was inspired by the democratic feeling for equality which was also congenial to the Arabs and never failed to attract them. Personal marks of respect he always rejected; his one desire was to be treated just like his fellow-beings, and to pass as one of them, and he disdained to surround himself with the halo of supernatural powers or to exploit occasions that might have given him the prestige of a miracle-worker. When the Arabs demanded of him miracles as proof of his heavenly mission, he simply replied that the revelation of God, Whom he served but as an instrument, was in itself miracle enough. He was always accessible to everyone. He visited the sick, he accompanied the dead to their last resting-place, while the hospitality and charity of his nature knew no bounds—and these have ever been counted two of the highest virtues in an Arab—while his engaging personality exercised a supreme fascination over all with whom he came in contact. His stately and honourable presence, together with the magical power of his eyes, enchanted all who approached him, denoting, as they did at once, individuality and a unique distinction.

The same qualities are also very evident in his teachings. These were simple, intelligible to every man, and addressed

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to every man as such. Muhammad allowed many of the traditional institutions which had been handed down from the earlier times to continue in so far as they did not collide or clash with the fundamentals of his own message. He knew well that by a complete destruction of the ancient customs he would miss the achievement of his object, especially with the conservative Arabs. This is why he retained the ceremonials of the early cults generally, and recognized in Islam various divine forms as good or evil spirits and angels, just as the Jews and the Christians had done with the Parsi conceptions and deities.

It is equally true that he destroyed much, but by way of compensation he issued many sensible prohibitions which affected the very essence of Arabian life. Blood-feuds and infanticide were removed for ever. Gambling, usury, and drinking were strictly forbidden; all traces of the early idol-worship were everywhere searched out and destroyed. Many laws were made against slavery, and even if it could not be completely removed, at least the path for its removal was paved and its rigour ameliorated.

By his rigid simplicity in dress and food he confessed his Arabian character. In general he was tolerant and mild; he only avenged himself—if that it can be called—on those who sought to destroy the cause of Islam. That he himself, even in the most righteous wrath, was capable of moderation and self-control, is most clearly shown by his behaviour in Mecca after his conquest of that city.

The chief importance of the teachings of Islam lies in its emphasis on monotheism, in its simplicity and the intelligibility of its fundamental principles, and in its practical view-points, which fit in exactly with life and human nature. In these teachings lies the reason for the immense spread of the religion of Islam, and these teachings were the message of Muhammad. Those who accepted them were, and are, granted a sure, moral support. They cannot, under any circumstances, estrange any man from his human duties; they can never constitute a social hindrance. For Muhammad not only recognized the value of active work, but also recommended it strongly. That



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is why he was a zealous opponent of monasticism which during his days, in the Buddhistic Orient as well as in the Christian Occident, was very much in evidence. And if monasticism did, later, rear its head in the Muslim countries, it was an apparition foreign to the nature of Islam and the result of mystical, ascetical influences deriving as well from other religions as from the Islamic sectarianism which had sprung therefrom. Every Muslim is supposed to be his own priest, and if, notwithstanding this, the Imams, Ulemas, and the like, later on wielded a great power, it was due to the fact that they were not only theologians but also jurists.

To attempt to deny that Islam has been of great service to mankind is tantamount to misjudging the whole history of the world, both in its human and cultural aspects. But apart from this fact, Islam, by its appearance, roused Christendom sharply from the lethargy and secularism under whose influence it was rapidly nearing complete collapse. Islam won over vast numbers of people, pining away, doped, as it were, by an uncouth fetishism, to a life of wholesome activity; it raised them to a sublime belief in one God, and trained them to become moral beings. If the orthodox schools professed to discern and recognize the doctrine of predestination in Islam's belief in God and raised it to the pedestal of dogma, they took a view precisely opposite to the Semitic, more especially the Arabian *weltanschauung*, which, as a matter of fact, lays more stress than any other school on individualism. There are many passages in the Qur-án which prove most conclusively that Muhammad himself never had it in mind for a moment to stifle and destroy the individuality which is the working capacity of man, by any such dogma. Muhammad liberated his people from that fearful demon which was compassing their ruin. That is to say, he liberated them from the curse of the blood-feud, thus successfully effecting that which had never before been contemplated as even possible. He united countless tribes into one nation; and inspired in them that undaunted courage and enthusiasm which enabled them not only to shake off the foreign yoke, which had been growing more and more oppressive, but also by a brilliant, well-nigh

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miraculous exploitation, as it were, of the genius that lay dormant within them to make history, and to leave an indelible impress on the cultural development of the world in an epoch-making manner.

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### THE PROPHET'S DEATH

"On the death of Muhammad, Abu Bakr addressed his friends, saying that, though Muhammad was dead, Muhammad's God still lived, and they should remain faithful to Him. Muhammad had uttered a similar sentiment himself after the Battle of Ohod."—QUR-ÁN, chap. iii.

THE Prophet died, as Prophets  
Had often died before;  
His earthly form, expiring,  
Sank down to rise no more.

Then should his sworn disciples  
Forsake the laws he gave,  
And see his faith and doctrine  
Laid with him in the grave?

Oh, no, he was but mortal,  
And mortals all must die,  
Tho' filled with Heav'nly fervour,  
Tho' blessed by God on High.

But to our hearts this message  
A voice exultant gives,  
Tho' dead may be Muhammad,  
Muhammad's God still lives.

Still fall the fresh'ning showers,  
Still shines the bounteous sun,  
Still in their wonted courses  
The mystic planets run.

Still teems the earth beneath us,  
Still glows the sky above:  
Then their Almighty Maker  
Still reigns in power and love.

DR. AMHERST D. TYSSSEN, D.C.L., *London.*

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### 'Idu 'l-Fitr (1347 A.H.)

The bleak English weather has always been a serious menace to Muslim congregations on days of Festival, and this year the outlook seemed particularly gloomy. The records of previous winters for over thirty years had been broken by a bitter spell from the Arctic regions which, for weeks, swept over Europe, bringing the thermometer from 15 degrees to 20 degrees below freezing-point here in England. This period of rigour had fortunately been broken only a few days before the actual date of the Festival, and this seemed a happy omen. But on the eve of the memorable day the weather turned grim once more and a bleak wind swept over the English Channel and the whole country. Indeed, it looked very much as if the sacred ceremony might be seriously interfered with, for as yet we have got no sheltered quarters to afford protection from the inclemency of English weather. The tiny Mosque at Woking—and we must not be taken as speaking inhospitably—cannot accommodate more than sixty souls. But the dull morning that followed, with dark and lowering clouds, did not succeed in deterring the zealous Muslim and other guests from travelling long distances—from eighty to a hundred miles—to participate in the function. Over three hundred members of the Muslim community gathered together from near and far, as is their custom, offering a picturesque spectacle to the casual onlooker, and at the same time conveying a far deeper significance to all serious observers who realize the transcendental power of assimilation inherent in Islam, a power which gives a safe refuge to all who are shipwrecked on the sea of agnosticism, and a certain solution to the racial and social problems of to-day.

More than a dozen nationalities were represented from all parts of the British Isles, and indeed of the world, on the Festival of 'Īdu 'l-Fitr, which marks the end of Ramadān, the month of fasting, and was celebrated on Wednesday, March 13th. There were Indians, Egyptians, Arabs, Persians, Afghans,



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Turkomans, Caucasians, Syrians, Malays, Iráqis, Russian Muslims, and Muslims of Western origin.

The huge Persian carpets of exquisite floral designs spread out on the trim and spacious lawn served, as is usual, for the floor, as it were, of that majestic Mosque, which the Muslims of the world in general and of the British Empire in particular, look forward with eager anxiety to see taking shape in the centre of the Metropolis—a vision shortly to be mainly realized by the munificence of His Exalted Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad and the selfless labours of the Rt. Hon. Lord Headley (El-Farooq), the British Muslim peer, to whom has been entrusted the honour of superintending the huge undertaking.

Prayers were performed at 11.30 a.m., followed by an address delivered by the Acting-Imam, Maulvi 'Abdu 'l-Majid, M.A., who laid stress on the point that the "Westernization of Islam" has none of the extraordinary significance attached to it by the Western Press, in the eyes of a Muslim whose religion is not only one of supreme tolerance but, in striking contrast to Catholicism, plastic and progressive, allowing a very wide margin for social and economic evolution. The Imam declared that civilizations gave to succeeding generations what they borrowed from those preceding. Civilization was no nation's monopoly. Arab Muslims had developed the sciences borrowed from the Greek, Roman, and Persian civilizations. After having come in contact with and assimilated these decaying Empires, they handed over their duty of intellectual custody safe to Europe. Europe, however, has unfortunately gone much too far in bragging over its later destructive developments, thus tending to obscure the undeniably vast quota of peaceful developments for which European culture may claim to be responsible.

Refreshments were served at 1 p.m. in the huge marquee pitched for the purpose. It was followed by a period of social intermingling which appeared to be greatly enjoyed by those present, for, besides making for cordiality and fraternal feeling, it rises to a broader view of life and fosters a keener zest for international amity amongst the followers of the Prophet. Some of the notable guests who had travelled long distances

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to have a glimpse of the sacred precincts and their beautiful surroundings for once perhaps in their life, or it may be once in a year, with all the zeal of a devout pilgrim to a holy sepulchre, were entertained later at tea. From morning till late in the evening the guests made the best of their visit, and a band of hosts at the Memorial House did their utmost for the welfare of the scattered Muslim community whose rallying point is the Mosque at Woking, an Islamic centre without counterpart in the Western world to-day.

Amongst those present were Lord Headley (El-Farooq), Khan Abdul Aziz Khan (formerly Afghan Trade Agent to London), H. Y. Mukimbhai of Bukhara, Khwaja Salahuddin of Dacca, Mr. Omar Hubert Rhys-Rankin of Bryngyn, Hertfordshire, Mr. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, C.B.E., I.C.S. (retired), Mr. Habeebullah Lovegrove, the Secretary of the British Muslim Society), Dr. and Madame Léon, and Indian, Malay, and Iraq cadets from the Royal Military College, Sandhurst.

### **An English Translation of the Holy Qur-án and Our Duty.**

Hazrat Maulānā Muhammad 'Alī, M.A., LL.B., whose name is already familiar to our readers, and who has been engaged upon the work of translating the Qur-án for the last twenty years, has now prepared a translation of the Qur-án without the parallel Arabic text which forms one of the chief features of his larger work. In the present handy volume the commentary, too, has been considerably abridged, so as to make it easily accessible to those who either could not afford to buy the former work or bring themselves to believe that they would benefit by plodding through the copious commentary of his larger edition of the Qur-án.

The chief feature of the present volume is the New Introduction dealing with questions and aspects of Islam which the learned translator had not hitherto had an opportunity of discussing, and touches on the Qur-án, essentials of religion, histories of prophets, and misconceptions regarding Qur-ánic teachings.

We welcome this valuable translation in its new garb, and

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hope that Muslims will try their level best to repay the debt of gratitude laid upon them by the Maulānā, in thus offering to the Muslim world the result of his selfless efforts and labour of love extending over a period of twenty years. We venture to suggest that one way of repaying that debt is to see that this translation reaches the hands of all the English-speaking friends who come in daily contact with each of us.

A copy of the prospectus, giving all particulars as to price, size, etc., is enclosed as an inset in this issue of the *Islamic Review*.

### **The Gospels, Communism and Wealth.**

If we ever want to ascertain the attitude of the Gospels on any questions which are definitely concerned with the actualities of our social well-being, we find that they are silent on almost all of them. And if by chance there happens to be any reference to any one of them, it is hopelessly vague and uncertain, so that it is capable of an infinity of interpretation according to the temperament or ignorance of him who thus seeks a solution of his difficulties.

The Western world, as the result of the recent economic and industrial exploitation of the forces of nature, has found itself in the possession, actual and potential, of immense wealth; and not only that, but such wealth has become concentrated in the hands of the very few, so that we find some "rolling" in riches, others in abject poverty, not even knowing what it is to satisfy hunger. Under such circumstances, with a view to mitigate the rigour and severity of poverty, to lessen somewhat the ghastly disparity which exists between one section of society and the other, every now and then the question as to what is the attitude of the Gospels towards wealth comes up for discussion. Some two years back a French communist, one Henri Barbusse, wrote a *Life of Christ* with the definite aim of proving that Jesus Christ was the first communist. Mr. Saklatvala, M.P., once remarked, during a sermon delivered by him in a nonconformist place of worship, that if modern Christians were not communists they ought to be, seeing that Communism was of the essence of early Christianity. This



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claim, to us, seems to be well-founded, and to prove it we have only to visualize the life of the early wandering evangelists. In the beginning, converts joined them eagerly, selling their property and paying the price received for it into the common purse. And if we say they were wrong, then we have but to admit that they had completely misunderstood the mind of the Master, which is to assume far too much.

But, leaving aside the question of Communism and Christianity, it is perfectly true that Jesus Christ has nothing to say on the questions of civic and national duty which are to-day so perplexing and all-important. We examine his words in vain for clear guidance on the problems of labour and commerce, and on the vexed question of the distribution of wealth. It is not unfair to contend that Jesus did not concern himself with this mundane life of ours. That is why he is silent on war, slavery, art, science and culture—all of which seem to lie beyond the orbit of his mission. Jesus just enunciates certain sublime principles but, more often than not, refrains from discussing their application in detail.

When we point out this deficiency in the teachings of this Great Teacher we are told that his aim was to create through the enunciation of sublime principles a moral temper which would enable us to judge for ourselves and act for ourselves. But such an answer ignores the fact that rightness of action can never be imparted by mere precepts and formulæ, any more than art can be taught by a study of its rules. The Art of life requires, not merely principles, but also that its details be worked out in the life of the potential Artist himself. Principles have meaning only in so far as they are shown to us as working in concrete terms, either through specified laws or through the attributes of a personality. If teachings of a prophet fail in either of these requisites, they are incomplete.

We fear that we may perhaps be accused of exaggerating the insufficiency of the Gospel teachings. We hasten, therefore, to quote the views of the Very Rev. W. R. Inge, D.D., Dean of St. Paul's, on "The Gospels and Wealth," which question was the subject-matter of an article by him in the *Evening Standard* for February 16, 1929. The Dean said:—

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" . . . And He (Jesus) never thought about economic problems, still less ever attempted to legislate about them. His message was one of spiritual redemption, not of social reform. All the cumbrous paraphernalia of comfort and luxury seemed to Him a useless burden, very hampering to the higher life. His followers were better without them. But the rich man is addressed as ' thou fool,' not as ' thou thief.'

" He demonetizes the world's currency at a stroke; but when He (Jesus) is requested to ' speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me,' Jesus answers sharply that these matters are no concern of His, and adds to His disciples, ' Take heed and beware of all covetousness, for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesseth.' "

To admit that Jesus's " message was only of spiritual redemption and not of social reform " is to declare openly that it cannot rise to the demands of the twentieth century; and besides, we really wonder if the spiritual redemption of the universe is at all possible without a corresponding social reform. For these are inseparable and they are the two aspects of one and the same thing.

The present-day world needs a religion which takes thought for " spiritual redemption " as well as for " social reform." And if the Gospels cannot meet this demand, then we should surely be justified in saying that the teachings of the Gospels are, if not incomplete, at least one-sided.

Dr. Inge comes to the conclusion that he " sees nothing un-Christian in saving money in moderation," and that the " capitalist is not necessarily a robber or a parasite." In this we are in agreement with him; for a study of the Gospels also shows that they do not entirely condemn mundane things. It is only when the hope of the nearness of the kingdom is vividly present to his mind, that Jesus preaches renunciation. Otherwise, many of his sayings are concerned with the right use of wealth. Jesus speaks of earthly things, now and then, as appointed means in the service of God. They are, according to him, evil, in so far as they are turned to base and selfish purposes. But such sayings and parables of Jesus or, indeed, the conclusions of the Dean, do not go very far. They suggest

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no solution for the problem of the bitter conflict ever raging between Labour and Capital, nor do they provide a panacea for the ills from which the social organism is suffering.

Let us analyse the question a little bit farther.

If it is not un-Christian to save money or to amass wealth, if a capitalist is not a parasite or a robber, do the Gospels anywhere suggest any method at all for preventing the concentration of wealth in the hands of the few? If the Gospels, according to Dean Inge, do not condemn capitalism, do they, on the other hand, indicate any means of giving the religious leaven, the spiritual touch, to the materialistic tendencies of the capitalist, without stultifying his personal motive, or negating his originating action? Or have the Gospels any means of making private property public property, or the owner of property responsible to society? Has Christianity any system by the help of which it can engender a feeling of sympathy in the breast of the rich, thereby killing contempt and disdain for the poor, and thus simultaneously change the mentality of the rich capitalist?

The answer to these weighty questions would appear to be in the negative.

### Islam and Wealth.

We know that Christianity does not condemn the saving of money, nor does the religion of Islam. But where Islam scores over Christianity is when it comes to the solution of the all-important questions which we raised above. Islam has an efficacious remedy for the social ills and Islam solves the problem by finding an equilibrium between the materialistic and spiritualistic tendencies. Christianity cannot find an equilibrium because it does not take into account man's materialistic tendencies. This assertion is borne out by the fact—we have only to repeat the assertion made in the preceding note—that the Gospels do not concern themselves with this world. The world, in its own place, has not sought advice from Christianity, because its teachings have always collided with the materialistic tendencies of mankind.



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The means adopted by Islam to hinder wealth from concentrating itself into the hands of the few are:—

(i) The socializing of land, which is the root of all production and an object of great industry. If a treasure-trove or a mineral mine is discovered in a piece of land belonging to a private individual, the State is its regular and legal owner according to Islam. This measure brought all means of production under the proprietorship of the State or people.

(ii) The Islamic law of inheritance, which does not recognize the law of primogeniture. This Islamic law of inheritance deals a death-blow to large dukedoms.

(iii) The interdiction of usury. Islam thus forcibly attacks capitalism so that it can never get out of hand.

(iv) The interdiction of monopoly and "cornering."

(v) The law of *Zakāt*, on which we think we should say a few more words rather than dismiss it peremptorily, because it is a principle whose real import has not yet been fully appreciated in the West.

An average man of to-day, finding it difficult to give up the world and adopt a secluded, solitary life, like a recluse, cannot make submission of his higher self solely to the materialistic side of the world. Where is he, then, to find the way? That is the question which arises. Labour is pitted against capital. The Bolsheviks are determined to get rid of both religion and capital; although they know a world without capital will not be able to make progress; for a world without personal interests would come to a standstill. Is it not, then, the duty of religion to come forward and help us in maintaining the golden mean? *Religion's duty is to hold the golden mean between what a man is and what a man ought to be.* A religion which does not strangle the natural instincts of man, but rather brings them within proper limits and trains them, is the religion man requires. The free play of natural instincts, just as well as their strangulation, is harmful, and hampers both the material and the spiritual aspects of man. Only that religion can claim to solve this problem which conforms to the "nature of man." And this religion is the religion of Islam (The Holy Qur-án, xxx. 30).

The religion of Islam realizes that if it were to ignore the

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production of goods and their consumption and the circulation of money, it would not meet the natural instincts of man. The Prophet Muhammad says: "There is no asceticism in Islam." Islam regards the material good things of the world as a means to an end. The Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said: "Poverty is my pride." The Prophet himself, and the four Caliphs that followed him, are high examples of the above truth. Nevertheless, Islam does not condemn the acquisition of riches. It does not try to abolish personal property with a stroke of the pen, as Bolshevism has done or is trying to do. When Bolshevism enacts that everybody should be condemned to that species of work which will visibly do service to the largest number of people, it forgets that it is cutting off the originating action, non-industrial research and speculative study, liberty to follow which things are as plainly the inborn right of any as the right to seek material welfare up to the limit of trespass on the right of others and of society. Islam establishes an equilibrium between the two extremes, guarding the interests of both sides. How?

What Islam does is this: it seeks to establish a balance, an equilibrium—thus making personal property and riches serve mankind. In Islamic countries private property remains, and continues to remain, private property; but in a certain sense it becomes public property. Islam entrusts, so to say, public property to the hands of a private individual, for the benefit of the public. But this does not mean that the ideal, from the point of view of Islam, is to spend the whole of such money on social or charitable purposes; what it has done is that it has connected the social side and the social aspect of property with the private life of an individual. The individual remains responsible to society. It recognizes the existence of private property and the evidence of a public right over private property. The recognition of this right is known as *Zakāt* (or poor-rate) in the religion of Islam. *Zakāt*, in a sense, provides for the "preservation" of society and at the same time for the self-preservation of an individual.

This is not the place to go into the details of this wonderful principle of Islam; one should consult the Qur-án on this. Suffice it to say that this poor-rate is not merely a materialistic

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measure; it reacts on the soul, on the personality of the individual who puts it into practice, nor can it be compared with the taxes levied by the State. The taxes levied by the State are soulless, having no effect on the moral side of man. On the other hand, in the case of poor-rate institution when one pays the poor-rate his action is accompanied with pious zeal and religious fervour. The only similarity between the two is that both of them must be paid.

### **Roman Catholicism and its pseudo Universal Brotherhood.**

In the *Catholic Times* for February 15, 1929, there was advanced a bold claim, which can best be enjoyed by repeating it verbatim. It ran thus:—

“Catholicity is of no nation, of no language, of no people. To every nation, tribe, or caste it brings the same message. Its influence breaks down the barriers of separate nationalities, and promotes a universal brotherhood. Men of different races worshipping at the Church’s altars, professing the same Faith, tend to lose their sectional feelings and prejudices, and bonds of harmony are forged by mutual forbearance and charity.”

We know that there is uniformity in Catholicism in matters of faith and doctrine, and that its universality is, to a certain extent, a fact. On matters of dogma and discipline the Catholic Church is perhaps the only religious institution in the world that is absolutely inflexible and intolerant. But as regards fraternity, equality among her members, drawn as they are from different races, colours and languages, the claim that “its influence breaks down the barriers of separate nationalities, and promotes a universal brotherhood,” is an empty boast. There is a distinction made between the major saints of the East recognized as such by the Church of Rome and the Latin saints. For example, in the case of a divergence of opinion on an important dogma—say the hypostasis or the persona or the physis of Jesus Christ—it is always the opinion of the Latin saints that is *per se* preferred. To make it clear, let us suppose that SS. Chrysostomos, Gregory of Nazianzo, Basil and Ephrem upheld the dogma that the Holy Ghost proceeds only from the Father; but if St. Augustine or St.



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Ambrose held that the third Person proceeds from the Father and the Son, the Oriental saints' teaching is rejected. Why? It is because they are not the saints of the Latin rite, or Latins.

Again, the Pope has, during the past few centuries, always been an Italian. There is no reason why this should be so. The Catholic Church treats the Catholics of inferior or "backward" races, of the subject and oppressed peoples, and of the poor converts of the missionaries, as slaves rather than brothers. This is a fact. Although the Roman Catholic Church displays outwardly a lavishness of benignity and fraternal equality, yet she has never had the same complete confidence in an Oriental Catholic Patriarch with his Synod of Bishops, as she would have, and has, in a Latin Bishop in Guatemala. A black bishop, a Chinese theologian, or an Armenian Catholic Archbishop can never befit to qualify even as third secretary to the Cardinal Prefect of the Propaganda Fide. And it is a fact that the "Representatives" of the Oriental Uniate Patriarchs in Rome live upon the alms they beg from monasteries and convents and from the pilgrims.

Is there one single Armenian, Indian, Chinese, Chaldean or Greek "Monsignor" in the Vatican or in the Curia Romana?

Islamic Brotherhood, on the other hand, is a reality, and has been recognized as such by friend and foe alike. Last year at the International Missionary Council held at Jerusalem, it was remarked that "the level of Islamic fraternity is not an elevated one; compared with the level on which the mind and purpose of Jesus Christ worked, it is a low one indeed. . . . But it is a much higher one than the level of much of what passes for Christianity. We (Christians) have nothing in the institutional Christianity of the West to approach the system of Islamic fraternity."<sup>1</sup>

There could be no more eloquent confession of the failure of Christianity to realize the ideal of brotherhood than this. Even the Christian missionary has to acknowledge the reality of Islamic brotherhood, although with a very bad grace. To

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by *Light*, Lahore, November 22, 1928, from the Report of the International Missionary Council of the Christians held at Jerusalem in Easter, 1928.

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us it seems to be a futile effort to attempt to minimize the standard of Islamic brotherhood by saying that "it is a low one compared with the mind and purpose of Jesus Christ." The fact remains that Christianity, after its existence of nearly two thousand years, with all the legacy of wealth and power of the past to help it, has not, as yet, been able to practise what it preaches. Herein lies its indictment.

Moreover, Muslim history is eloquent in support of the above-quoted encomium which, be it remembered, comes from the pens of detractors of Islam. The palace of the Caliphs of Baghdad was crowded with officials from all nationalities: Turks, Persians, Kurds, Afghans, Chinese, etc., and learned doctors of law and religion of all races were received like brethren.

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